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FALSE IMPRESSION

A

COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

RICHARD CUMBERLAND, Esq.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ER MONTRATH,	*Mr Murray.*
ON,	*Mr Holman,*
an Apothecary,)	*Mr Quick.*
NG, (an Attorney,)	*Mr Whitfield.*
N SINGLE, (an old Servant,)	*Mr Munden.*
MER GAWDRY,	*Mr Davenport*
AC, (his Son,)	*Mr Follet.*
ETER, (Journeyman to SCUD,)	*Mr Abbott.*
JACK, (a Boy,)	*Mr Simmons.*
FRANK, (a Footman,)	*Mr Thompson.*
LADY CYPRESS,	*Miss Chapman*
EMILY FITZALLAN,	*Miss Betterton*
JENNY SCUD,	*Mrs Knight.*
MRS BUCKRAM,	*Mrs Davenpor*
RACHEL WILLIAMS,	*Mrs Norton.*

FALSE IMPRESSION

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

A Chamber in the House of SCUD *the Apothecary.*

Enter SCUD.

Scud. Aha! very good, very good. Here I am again—no bad night's work—pretty fairish job—patient none the better, myself none the worse—tipt two guineas for sitting up with old Lady Cypress—slept comfortably in an easy chair—nibbled a cold chicken with my lady's woman—tiffed a can of flip with the old butler—cribbed a kiss or two from the sweet lips of Mr Rachel, and gave her a box of cardamums and a bot[illegible] of elderflower water in return for the favour—So far, so good—Well done, Jerry Scud!—Holloa! Jack, boy, puppy! where are you?

Enter JACK.

Jack. Here am I, master.

Scud. [illegible] slippers, sirrah! Take off my boo[illegible] [*Exit* JACK.

M[illegible] boots—very right, very re[illegible] dawb her petticoats, an[illegible]

ew gig, forsooth; and where wou'd you
ow, if the very man you have defamed
d your life, at the peril of his own?
He did, he did—I don't deny it. He run
ipt me over a wheel-barrow—tumbled under
s—might have been kicked to atoms—sur-
work as it was—snapt my arm—well it was
y neck—much obliged to Harry Algernon—
spoke against him since.

Jen. Speak for him, man; 'tisn't enough you do speak against him; liberate your conscience.

Scud. Jenny, Jenny, liberate my conscience, as you call it, and I shall liberate my customers. If Harry Algernon will be a rantipole; if his women and his wine, his racing and his revelling, have crossed him out of the old lady's books, how am I to blame?

Jen. Well, well, 'tisn't your business to set the worst side of his character to view; you have benefited by his courage and humanity—why don't you talk of them, and hold your tongue about his frailties?

Scud. My tongue can do nobody any harm. I tell you it is all up with him: Lawyer Earling has done his business. If ever he enters my lady's doors, or touches a shilling of her fortune while he breathes, set me down for a fool and a false prophet.

Jen. Suppose he does not aim at touching a shilling of her fortune; suppose he only wants—but here he comes, and will tell you what he wants.

ALGERNON *enters.*

Alg. Ah, Jerry, my worthy fellow, give me your hand, give me your help.—No, no, that's not the point at present—take your fingers off my pulse.

Scud. Very high, let me tell you—very full—gallops at a furious rate.

Alg. Expectation raises it, hope quickens it: love is my disease; and if you don't stand my friend, disappointment will be my death.

Scud. Love! Can't cure love—troub[illegible] cure the consequences of it.

Alg. Hark ye, Jerry; you are an intim[illegible] Cypress; I, though her nearest of kin, a[illegible] Within her castle lives the idol of my so[illegible] Fitzallan: obtain for me an interview with [illegible] though you can't cure love, you may rescue [illegible] death, and then you may fairly boast of having [illegible] one man's life by your practice.

Scud. Can't do't—not possible—fair Emily [illegible] goes out of the castle.

Alg. Therefore it is I want to go into it.

Scud. Hopeless case—not upon the chances. Old lady won't bear to look upon you.

Alg. I'll excuse her if I may but look upon the young one: manage that for me, my good fellow.—Nobody knows me; nobody can find me out; I'm a stranger to the whole family.

Scud. And so you are likely to remain.

Jen. Come, come, Jerry, cast about; be good natured, and contrive some errand or pretence to introduce him. If there is a little danger, surely you may risk it for the preserver of your life.

Scud. Foolish scheme, jewel Jenny; foolish scheme.—Won't do.

Alg. Have you no medicines to send in? Can't I personate your pestle-and-mortar-man?

Scud. Not you; I keep no such pestle-and-mortar-man in my shop.

Alg. But you keep a heart in your body, and a memory in your brains, therefore you must stand for me, as I have stood for you.

Jen. Hush! here comes Simon Single, the keeper of the castle. Leave me with him, and I warrant I have a key to his castle.

Alg. Angel of my hope, into your hands I commit my cause.

ner one nor the other, I have enough
ner, and the prize had been my own.
so she shall: I've a project for your

doubt if I ought to seek it.

Very true; lay it aside altogether; it will
plaguy deal of mischief upon me, and do no
you.

Tell it me, however.

You'll comprehend it at once. There is a
er valet to be hired for the heiress, fit to wait
n her person, and grace the back of her chair at
ble.

Alg. I can't do it; I am not equal to the task; I can't approach so near, and yet refrain. When she spoke to me, I shou'd be lost; when she looked on me, I shou'd betray myself; and when I handed her the plate, I should present it on my knee.

Scud. Ay, then you wou'd be vollied out of the window, and I kicked out of the doors. Now, silly Jenny, what's become of your project?

Alg. Hold there! Though dangerous in the extreme it is not altogether desperate. If I cannot undertake the offices you describe, I may yet present myself as a candidate for her service, and in that character perhaps obtain an interview with my charmer. That hope is worth an effort.

Scud. It isn't worth a farthing, and will be pound and pounds out of my way. Cursed scrape! foolish Jenny! cursed scrape!

Alg. But where shall I get a proper dress to appear in?

Scud. No where; you can't appear at all.

Jen. Fear nothing; I'll provide you with a dress

Scud. Egad, she has a provision for every thing.

Alg. Who but must conquer that is armed by the fair! There is a rascal in the family, Earling by name

who has slanderously defamed me; I'll w[illegible] from his head.

Scud. Take care: Earling is an attorney[illegible] has any ears, you will pay for wringing th[illegible] has none, you'll be puzzled to lay hold of th[illegible]

Alg. Come, Jerry, I see what staggers yo[illegible] are afraid of losing the old lady's custom.

Scud. You are right; I am. She takes physi[illegible] you take pleasure.

Alg. Mark me! I'll not promise you to swallo[illegible] many medicines as she does; but, come what w[illegible] I'll guarantee you against all losses incurred on m[illegible] account; so fear nothing, but come on. Discretio[illegible] I can't boast of, but in honour I will never be found wanting.

Scud. That's enough, that's enough! Deal upon honour, and I am with you. I love to do a good-natured action, when there's nothing to be lost by it.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Changes to an Apartment in LADY CYPRESS'S *Castle.*

LADY CYPRESS, LAWYER EARLING.

Lady Cy. Enter, enter, Mr Earling: you come upon a wish.

Ear. Ever prompt to approve myself your ladyship's most devoted and most absolute humble servant, upon a wish I come, upon a word I vanish.

Lady Cy. I am satisfied with your diligence; you may spare yourself the trouble of describing it.

Ear. I am dumb.

Have you the memorandums about you, ted?

my tears have not defaced them. Believe ous lady, when I saw my own name set down quest so munificent, I was covered with , I was choaked with gratitude.

y Cy. Out with it then, out with your name, n is the effect, and write in Algernon's; I war- gratitude will not choak him.

Ear. Good, very good! Your ladyship has the gift rallying me in the most pleasant way out of my etaphors. Choak is a figure somewhat of the trong.

Lady Cy. Why, yes, and I should think you may venture upon the legacy, and risk the effects of it; so copy out your paper when you please.

Ear. I'll set my clerks upon it out of hand.

Lady Cy. You'll set the world upon it when I'm out of it; for you have totally cashiered Harry Algernon, and he is the son of my sister.

Ear. And your sister was the wife of his father, and his father was your unremitting persecutor, who vex'd you with a suit in Chancery for ten long years; and ten might have been added to ten, had it not been that I—I speak modestly of myself; I am no egotist—I speak simply of number one, and nobody else, for your barrister was a cypher—

Lady Cy. But a cypher put to number one adds no trifle to its value; so the upshot is, you gain'd the suit, and I paid the costs—a victory little to be envied—and, after all, is it just and equitable the son should suffer for the father's faults?

Ear. O jus et æquum! as if he had not faults enough of his own to warrant your exclusion of him.

Lady Cy. I have heard enough of his faults, I confess, if you are correct in describing them. If you have deceived me——

Ear. I! I deceive you! I defame your nephew!

I, who have never spoke of his offences but with regret and sorrow; never brought a story to your ears, but with the view of intercepting malice, and softening down impressions; I deceive you! then where is truth and virtue?

Lady Cy. Both in sight, as I shou'd hope—for Emily appears.

EMILY FITZALLAN *enters.*

Ear. I humbly take my leave. Miss Emily, I'm yours—Humph! not a word! Your faithful friend, to serve you. Not a look! Upstart! I'll marry the old lady, and cut her out of every shilling—I will.

[*Exit* EARLING.

Lady Cy. Approach, my dear! Come near me. I must talk with you. Well! You have been to see the apartment I have newly furnished—and do you like it, Emily?

Em. 'Tis elegant in the extreme—'tis sumptuous.

Lady Cy. 'Tis yours, my dear; it is to grace my Emily that I have decked it out.

Em. For me such finery?

Lady Cy. Child of my heart, for you. All I possess is yours.

Em. I hope you will not tempt me to forget that I was poor and humble.

Lady Cy. I hope not: Nature has endowed you with admirable qualities; prosperity, I trust, will not pervert them. It does not quite come on you by surprise: you cou'd not well suppose I shou'd adopt the son of my most unrelenting persecutor.

Em. I did not dare to reason in that case.

Lady Cy. But you must know how worthless in himself, how undeserving of my favour is he, who, in respect of consanguinity, is the only person that cou'd supersede you.

Em. You speak of Mr Algernon?

Lady Cy. I do; I speak of him, whom no one speaks of but with reproach and scorn.

Em. I do confess I have heard much evil speaking, but 'twas from one who shou'd have more respect for truth and decency than to traduce the nephew to the aunt.

Lady Cy. What do you mean? Wou'd you defend a libertine?

Em. No, madam; I defend no libertine; but you will not be angry if I avow that I detest a libeller. If he, who thus has poisoned your opinion, knows not the character, the manners, habits, sentiments, connections, perhaps not even the outward form and feature of the man whose fame he mangles, can I be to blame if I implore you, for the love of justice, to hear before you strike?

Lady Cy. What is this, Emily? What is this warmth?

Em. Honest, not prudent; out of time and place, but still sincere, though rash.

Lady Cy. You call on me to hear before I strike; I now demand if you that strike have heard? Do you know Algernon? Have you conversed with him?

Em. Madam, I have.

Lady Cy. You have! When, where? He comes not hither; never was admitted, never will be, within these doors. Astonishing, that you should dare to tell me you have made acquaintance with this profligate.

Em. Hear my defence.—You gave me leave to pass a little time, for change of air, after my late confinement, at your hill-farm. One evening I had rambled about a mile from home, when, upon entering a little copse, through which my foot-path led, judge of my horror, when a villain, such I must call him, surprised me, seized me, and in spite of cries, prayers, and entreaties—

Lady Cy. Merciful Providence! what do you tell me?

Em. A dreadful tale I shou'd have had to tell, or died ere I cou'd tell it, had not Heaven sent me a rescue, a brave, brave preserver, who, with a soul all fire, and motion quick as lightning, sprung on the assailant, grasped him in his arms, and after a contention, furious, though short, hurled him to the ground, breathless, and maimed with bruises.—Which of these merits the name of *profligate?* Not he that saved me —It was Algernon.

Lady Cy. Algernon, do you say? My worthless nephew Algernon! Take care!

Em. Renounce me, if I tell you an untruth.

Lady Cy. I'm all astonishment. Who was the assailant?

Em. Madam, I know not. Your heroic nephew bore me half dead and fainting to my house; 'twas not till then I knew him to be Algernon. He staid with me no longer than till the care of the good people had recovered me: The next morning I returned to the castle, fearing to remain any longer in so solitary a place. Of Algernon I saw no more. Now suffer me to ask, is this the conduct of a profligate?

Lady Cy. 'Tis a strange story.

Em. 'Tis a true one, madam.

Lady Cy. Why have you kept it to yourself thus long? You've been returned two days.

Em. Because until this hour I have not seen your spirits in a state to bear the slightest agitation.

Lady Cy. And do you think the agitation slight that I now suffer? No, I see your danger, Emily; I see your weak credulity; and much I fear you'll find yourself the dupe of Algernon. What business cou'd he have at my hill-farm?

Em. Madam, your tenant's wife nursed Mr Algernon.

Lady Cy. She never shou'd have nursed you, Emily, or harboured you one moment, had I known it.—

Em. That's hard; but I must suffer, and be silent.

Lady Cyp. Be silent then, and go to your chamber; there you may meditate on what you have been, and call to mind, with timely recollection, what you may be again. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

Castle Hall.

SIMON SINGLE, FARMER GAWDRY, *and his Son* ISAAC.

Sim. Master Gawdry, Master Gawdry, have I not said the word, and will not the word that I have said serve and suffice to put thee out of doubt, that Isaac thy son, thy son Isaac, will not do?

Gaw. I pray you now, Master Simon Single, be kind-hearted, and consider of it. I shou'd be main proud to have him in my lady's livery: he's a docile lad, and can turn his hand, as I may say, to any thing.

Sim. Let him turn it to the plough: he's a bumpkin: let him drive the team, and dung the land; he's born to it: let him ring the hogs, and tend the stye, and toil in the drudgery of his vocation. Nature never fashioned him to be the lacquey of a lady.—You are answered, Farmer Gawdry.

Gaw. Ay, master, I am answered, but I am not heard. I hann'a told you half the things my boy can do.

Sim. What can he do? Unfold!

Gaw. A power—Speak for yourself, Isaac; tell the gentleman what you can do.

Isaac. A' looks so grave, a' daunts me.

Gaw. What shou'd daunt thee, boy? Don't hang thy head, but up, and tell him boldly what canst do.

Isaac. I will, father, I will.—I can sing psalms, shoot flying, worm the puppies, cut capons, climb the rookeries, and make gins for polecats.

Sim. Wonderful! And can't you eat and drink, and sleep and snore abundantly? Can't you wench when you have an opportunity, swear now and then upon occasion, and lie a little, when it serves your purpose?

Isaac. Yes, yes, I know something of all these matters.

Gaw. I told you he was fit to wait upon any lady in the land.

Sim. Upon any lady but the lady Cypress he is welcome; upon her he may wait long enough before he gets any other answer than I've given you—*Dictum est*—Good morning to you.

Gaw. Good morning to me indeed! How long, I trow, have you been this great man, to carry yourself in your geers so stately? I can call to mind the day when you came into this family as mere a bumpkin as you think my boy to be.

Sim. Keep your temper, neighbour Gawdry, keep your temper; mount your steed, amble homewards, visit your *oves* and your *boves*, comfort your good dame, and present my humble service to her.

Gaw. I won't comfort her; I won't present your humble service to her; I don't find you are so willing to do her any service; and as for humble, it don't belong to you—but mark my words—time is at hand

—county election's coming on—ask me for a plumper then, do; ask me, I say, for a plumper—and mind where I'll direct you to look for it. Come along, Isaac, come along! [*Exeunt* GAWDRY *and* ISAAC.

Sim. We men in power, when we have a place to give away, make nine enemies to one friend, and 'tis nine to one if that friend don't turn an enemy before he is well warm in his office.—Ah, doctor, is it you?

SCUD *and* SIMON SINGLE.

Scud. Your servant, your servant! I have brought you the young man Jenny recommended.

Sim. Have you so, have you so! Where did you fall in with him?

Scud. Crossed upon him by mere chance—clever fellow—wants a place—think he'll suit Miss Emily—no objection, dare say, on his part—won't haggle for wages—will you see him?

Sim. Hold a moment.—Has he got a character?

Scud. Two—a good one and a bad one; but the good one is what he wou'd prefer being known by.

Sim. I give him credit for that. What name does he bear?

Scud. Henry, alias Harry—you may take your choice.

Sim. He has two of them, it seems: very good! What besides?

Scud. Scudamore.

Sim. A branch of the Scuds, we'll suppose: but we'll see him.—Where does he come from?

Scud. T'other side of the country—better let him answer questions for himself—come in, young man; present yourself to Mr Simon Single, the respectable major-domo of this illustrious family.

ALGERNON *enters.*

Sim. So, so! what's here? This is no drudge for all work and all weathers; this is a thing for Sun-

days and for holidays! As clean a peg to hang a livery on as heart cou'd wish!—Well, Henry Scudamore, you're for a place, and, I conclude, one where there's least to do will please you most; you are not used to labour.

Alg. I am not.

Sim. Nor ever mean to be, I dare believe.

Scud. Oh fie! you'll put him down; he's modest to a fault.

Sim. If that's his only fault, we'll overlook it. What can you do?

Alg. My best to please my mistress, and something, I should hope, to gain your favour.

Sim. Egad, you've found the way to that already: I like your answer much; I like your manners, countenance, deportment; and I am no mean judge, although I say it.

Alg. Sir, you have all the right in life to say it; for if none else will give us a good word, we must e'en praise ourselves.

Sim. A sharp wit, let me tell you.—Harkee, Henry; your name I know; the place from whence you come I do not know; your qualifications remain to be proved, and your character, I dare say, if it is of your own giving, will be an excellent good one.

Alg. With your leave I should prefer to speak upon all these points with the lady I aspire to serve.

Sim. Aspire to serve! Sir, your most obedient humble servant.—I shall *aspire* to ask you no further questions, but turn you over for examination to the lady of the house herself.

Alg. Is this the lady of the house now approaching?

MRS DOROTHY BUCKRAM *enters.*

Sim. Of the lower house she is the lady. Make your best bow to Mrs Dorothy Buckram, but don't be too aspiring: if you offer to salute her, you are a lost man; that blessing don't fall to my lot above

once in a twelvemonth, and some would not aspire even to that.

Dor. What is this ribaldry that you are talking? and who is this young man?

Sim. A youth of promise; a candidate for service; one that aspires to the supreme delight of carrying clogs, and combing lap-dogs for the lady heiress.

Dor. What is his name?

Sim. Henry.

Dor. A gentle name; soothing and soft: I much approve of Henry: I've ever had a prejudice for Henry.

Sim. Simon is sweeter.

Scud. Jerry is more brisk.

Sim. Sweet Simon—simple Simon—why, 'tis music—it is a lute.

Scud. But Jerry sounded in F sharp's a trumpet.

Dor. Yes, truly, in the ears of a hen-pecked husband, when his partlet cackles.—But can't this youngster speak? Henry shou'd speak like Henry; let us hear you. Were I the mistress you aspired to serve, what wou'd you say to me?

Alg. Silence becomes a servant; 'tis a virtue; but if I were your equal and your lover—

Dor. Ah, then what wou'd you say?

Alg. Then, if you stood all tempting, as you are, full in my sight, and cheered your happy swain with smiles so lovely, languish so alluring—

Dor. What wou'd you do?

Alg. I'd snatch you to my heart, press you, caress you, smother you with fondness.

Dor. And so you will: let go, or I'll scream out.

Sim. Bravo! you'll do—A very good rehearsal.

Scud. A very villainous one, if my Jenny has had a part in it.

Sim. I give you joy, young man; your fortune's made.

Dor. I wonder who has taught him this assurance.

Scud. Oh, madam, he's a pupil of my Jenny's; I've nothing to do with him.

Sim. Come, come, there's no offence; 'twas a fair challenge, and no true Englishman wou'd have refused it.—Courage, my lad! You'll never want a service. Let us adjourn. [*Exeunt.*

LADY CYPRESS *and* LAWYER EARLING.

Lady Cy. Well, now you've heard the story, what do you say to it?

Ear. Nothing.

Lady Cy. What, nothing? Then you don't believe it?

Ear. Pardon me, madam; I believe it happened just as Miss Emily relates it to you; I do believe there was a man set on to frighten her, and that he took a drubbing from her hero, for which I also perfectly believe he was well paid.

Lady Cy. Why should you not suppose it might be real? there are such drunken fellows up and down.

Ear. But sober men will not be taken in by such stale tricks. You meet the same, or something very like it, in every paltry novel that you read. The man's escaped; you'll never hear of him; his bargain was not made to go to prison.

Lady Cy. I see it now: I see through the contrivance.

Ear. Yes, madam, and you may also see which way your property will go, if ever miss has the disposal of it.

Lady Cy. I'll never sign those deeds in her behalf, till she consents to marry as I'd have her. Indeed, indeed, you have saved me, my good sir, from a most rash and inconsiderate measure.

Ear. Now is the time—I'll seize the happy moment.—My ever honoured lady, I but live to save and serve you; my whole life has been devoted to

your happiness! The founder of your fortune, I have fought your battles manfully, and stood a siege as long as that of Troy in your defence; ay, and wou'd die in it, if need required.

Lady Cy. There is no need—I know your services, and at my death you'll find I have not under-rated them.

Ear. She melts—I'll strike.—Not at your death, dear lady, (may that be far, far off!) but with your life reward me.—Hah! that tells she yields to the impression.

Lady Cy. How with my life? You have my good opinion: you have my friendship; what more can I do for you?

Ear. Think of me only as I think of you. Why shou'd a thankless girl engross your fortune? Use it; employ it; many happy days are yet in store for you. When the lord Cypress married you, he was your senior by a pretty many years more than your ladyship is mine.

Lady Cy. Your inference from that?

Ear. I dare not quite reveal it. I wou'd wish your ladyship to take it to your thoughts. A hint, a word, a look, so it were kind, wou'd greatly help me to declare it to you.

Lady Cy. We'll talk no more at present, if you please; you will remember you're my agent, sir; and I will not forget your services.—Good day to you.

Ear. May every day and every hour be happy as I cou'd wish them, and you will be blest.—'Twill do—her pride is dropping from the perch—she totters; I shall catch her. [*Exit.*

SIMON SINGLE *enters.*

Lady Cy. How now, Simon! Have you found a proper lad amongst the tenants sons to serve Miss Emily?

Sim. Of them not one, so help me, honoured lady

—I cannot recommend them; they are boors, clowns, clodpates.

Lady Cy. What is to be done?

Sim. There is a youth attending—Doctor Scud speaks in his favour.

Lady Cy. Scud's a babbler.—What do you say?

Sim. He is above the level of these indigenous smock-frocks and hobnails. I shou'd advise your ladyship to see him.

Lady Cy. By all means; let him enter.

Sim. Henry, you are permitted to approach: the lady Cypress deigns to look upon you—make your obeisance!

ALGERNON *enters.*

Lady Cy. So! this is the young man—Henry you call him; what other name belongs to him?

Sim Scudamore, an please you; so he gives in himself.

Lady Cy. No vulgar name—and, so far as appearances bespeak, no vulgar person. Well, Henry Scudamore, you want a place?

Alg. I wish to serve your ladyship.

Lady Cy. Have you been in service?

Alg. Never.

Lady Cy. So I shou'd guess. What leads you now to seek it?

Alg. The ambition of belonging to your ladyship; but I wou'd answer more directly, might I presume.

Lady Cy. I understand you. Simon, leave the room. [*Exit* SIMON. You seem embarrassed. Was it not your wish to speak to me in private?

Alg. Madam, it was.

Lady Cy. And what have you to impart, that one, who possibly may be your fellow-servant, might not be privy to?

Alg. Madam, I am a gentleman by birth; that being known amongst my fellow-servants, might chance to raise an evil mind against me, and make my humble station painful to me: your candour will not think the worse of me because I am unfortunate.

Lady Cy. No, not the worse in charity of thought, but I cannot employ you in my service. No gentleman must wait upon that lady, to whom I else perhaps had destined you—No gentleman, at least, of your appearance.

Alg. I'm sorry for it—but it is my fate to be judged by appearances, and condemned by reports.

Lady Cy. If you have fallen into this decay by mere misfortune, or injurious treatment, I can pity you; nay, Henry Scudamore, if that's your name, and if I knew your story, (which at present I have not time to hear,) I cou'd do more—I cou'd (and something whispers me I wou'd) consider your necessities, and help you.

Alg. I am the victim, madam, of a villain. My story is soon told, for it is founded on a simple fact, which I can make appear to full conviction, if you will condescend to give me hearing, and suffer me to state such evidence as cannot be opposed by my defamer.

Lady Cy. I know not what to say to that, young man; I have no strength to spare for other's burdens, and am already loaded with my own, even to the breaking down of my weak frame. If this a case of pity, I've a hand that's open to your wants without inquiry; if it is matter of grievance and redress, I would recommend you to state it to my lawyer, Mr Earling, and he shall see you righted.

Alg. I humbly thank you; I will state it to him, and trust the goodness of your heart will see me righted.

Lady Cy. Ah! I've no heart, no health, no nerves to hear you. You must excuse me, Henry Scuda-

more. I dare not undertake to arbitrate; but wait Sir Oliver Montrath's arrival, and he shall hear you; he's a noble gentleman.

Alg. Where shall I wait the whilst?

Lady Cy. Where? Let me see—yes, you may stay this night here in the castle. My old servant Simon will entertain you at the second table. Does that content you?

Alg. I were most unthankful if it did not.

Lady Cy. Follow me then, and I will give my orders. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

EMILY'S *Apartment.*

EMILY FITZALLAN, RACHEL WILLIAMS.

Em. Rachel!

Rac. Madam! What are your commands?

Em. Don't answer me in that style. I have so long been a dependent, and lived in such familiarity with you, my good Rachel, in particular, that, though you are my servant, I don't wish you to use a language to me so submissive.

Rac. Whatever language you wou'd have me use, so it will but convey the same respect, I will endeavour to conform to it.

Em. I wou'd fain keep upon such terms with fortune, that I may fall back to my former poverty without a pang; therefore, if ever you perceive me giddy with prosperity, recal my recollection to the low situation I emerg'd from, and do it honestly, my girl; don't spare me.

Rac. You'll want no monitor to warn you against pride; and yet, as you require sincerity, there is one warning I conceive is needful just at this crisis.

Em. State it without reserve.

Rac. Are you not now in danger of incurring your patroness's most severe displeasure?

Em. Perhaps I am; but be explicit with me.

Rac. Your champion Algernon, has he not left a thorn in that soft heart?

Em. If you call gratitude a thorn, he has.

Rac. Are you quite sure 'tis only gratitude? May it not soon be love? Nay, give me leave—is it not love already?

Em. Well, if it is, how can I strive against it?

Rac. Prudence will tell you how.

Em. Prudence will tell me an old gossip's tale; but who, that is in love, will hear her out?

Rac. Are you aware how fatal it will be to all your expectations, if my lady discovers your attachment?

Em. Are you aware how natural it is to love the man who saves you from destruction? My lady gives me riches; Algernon rescues my life and honour: I was lost but for his courage; I am only poor without her bounty; and if she demands that I shou'd sacrifice my heart's affections, she makes conditions that I cannot grant, nor wou'd her fortune bribe me to the attempt.

Rac. Do you know Mr Algernon's character?

Em. Does he that blackens it? What does my lady know but what that lawyer instils into her ear? Infamous man! And why does he defame him? Why, but because he may retain his power in the estate, and garble it at pleasure? Besides, he has an ample legacy: believe me, I hold it a disgrace to read my name in the same page with his; nor wou'd I be his partner in the crime of plundering Algernon, but that I live in hopes the time will come when I may render back the unlawful spoil.

Rac. Then temporize the whilst, my dearest lady, or that time never will be yours.

Em. 'Tis right; you council well; and now I will confide a secret to you: I have warned Algernon who is his enemy, and what base stories have been forged against him.—Ah! who is this? 'Tis he; 'tis he himself!

ALGERNON *enters.*

Alg. Hush! not so loud.

Em. Your name was on my lips. How came you here? How did you gain admission, and what have you in view by this disguise? You may disclose; this friendly girl is secret.

Alg. Then let her stay; I wou'd not be surprised in private with you. I am here by sufferance of Lady Cypress: I have seen my aunt for the first time, conversed with her, and lodged a plea for further hearing, when her friend, Sir Oliver Montrath, shall be at leisure: one of his servants is already come; he may be soon expected.

Em. And his nephew, does he accompany him?

Alg. I did not ask that question of the servant, but if you wish it I will make the inquiry.

Em. No, let it pass. I know your aunt expects him.—Hark, Rachel, somebody is at the door—see who it is.

Rac. Madam, there's nobody, nor any sound, that I can hear.

Em. Stand where you are and listen!—What is the meaning of this dress you wear?

Alg. I put it on to counterfeit a servant, or, I shou'd rather say, to ask for service—Will you not try me, Emily? Don't take my character from that attorney; I'll serve you honestly.

Em. You serve! You're jesting.

Alg. Am I not your servant? I am your faithful servant.

Em. My heroic preserver—that is your rightful character, and by that title you have a claim upon my gratitude, which only can expire with life—and now inform me what you have in view by this adventure.

Alg. I am not so romantic as to think I can maintain my post longer than till to-morrow, to which time I have a furlough by authority; if fortune stands

my friend, I may effect something within that period; but even now am I not supremely blest to see you, hear you, and behold that face, that was of late so pale and wan with terror, restored to all the lustre of its charms?

Em. That face, assure yourself, will never be turned from you, to league with those who seek to rob you of your fame and fortune.

Alg. I am not robbed of what enriches you.

Em. The heart that swells with indignation against all that wrong you, had, but for you, been cold and motionless.

Alg. Oh, Emily, forbear.

Em. This, and no more—I never will be made the slave of interest, or dupe of slander. My confidence in you cannot be shaken, my obligations cannot be computed. The life that I possess is of your giving. What can I say, but that I live for you?—Now leave me, Algernon; not a word, but leave me. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

LADY CYPRESS *and Servant*

Lady Cy. Hark! 'tis the porter's bell—run to the hall, and tell me if Sir Oliver's arrived.

Serv. Madam, he's here: Sir Oliver is present.

SIR OLIVER MONTRATH *enters.*

Lady Cy. Welcome, most welcome! May I trust

my senses? This is above hope, that you and I should live to meet again.

Sir Oliv. My ever dear, my ever honoured lady!

Lady Cy. Time has gone lightly over you, my friend! You, that have traversed sea and land, are whole; I, that have tempted neither, am become a shattered wreck on shore.

Sir Oliv. Not so, not altogether so, thank Heaven! Time is a surly guest, whose courtesy does not improve by long acquaintance with us; but we'll not rail at him, since he permits us once more to meet.—And here's the same old castle, still unspoilt by modern foppery; ay, and the same old grandsires, firm in their frames, with not one wrinkle more than when I parted from them years ago.

Lady Cy. Ay, years indeed—but you have filled them up with glory; yours has been a life of themes for future history, a field of laurels to adorn your tomb—mine has been tame and simple vegetation.

Sir Oliv. I have lived a soldier's life; but, Heaven be thanked, I've plundered no nabob, stript no rajah of his pearls and pagodas, nor have I any blood upon my sword, but what a soldier's honour may avow—but you have here a relict of my gallant comrade, Major Antony Fitzallan. He was wounded by my side, carried off the field, and died in my arms. With his last breath he bequeathed ('twas all he had to bestow) a blessing to his daughter, and charged me, if I lived to come to England, to thank you for your charity, and be a friend to her.

Lady Cy. I trust you'll find her worthy of your friendship.

Sir Oliv. Is she good? is she amiable? Has she her father's principles, her mother's purity?

Lady Cy. See her, and judge; she's naturally sincere.—But where's your nephew? Where is Mr Lionel?—I reckoned with much pleasure upon seeing him.

Sir Oliv. Ah, my good lady, there I am unfortu-

nate. I had built upon the hopes of presenting him to you; but it cannot be at present. Poor Lionel is indisposed, and must bear his disappointment with what philosophy he can.

Lady Cy. The disappointment is reciprocal—a little time, I hope, will bring him to us.

Sir Oliv. I wish it may.—But look! Who comes?

Lady Cy. This is my orphan charge—This is our Emily.

EMILY FITZALLAN *enters.*

Sir Oliv. The very image of her lovely mother.

Lady Cy. My dear, this is Sir Oliver Montrath; mine and your father's friend; as such you'll honour him.

Sir Oliv. As such I claim the privilege to embrace and press her to my heart. My child, my charge, devolved upon me by a father's legacy, when breathing out his gallant soul in prayers and blessings for his Emily.

Em. Oh, sir, was you, was you beside him at that dreadful moment?

Sir Oliv. I was, my child! These arms supported him, covered with wounds, and crowned with victory—Alas! how dearly purchased.

Em. Then let his last commands be ever sacred; if you have any such in charge to give me, impart them, I conjure you.

Sir Oliv. I have none but blessings to impart. In Fortune's gifts the hero had no share, in Virtue's he abounded. In the care of this your generous benefactress he had left you, to that and Heaven's protection he bequeathed you.

Em. I am content; and what before I owed in gratitude to this beneficent and noble lady, I now will pay with filial obedience and duty superadded. Suffer me, dearest madam, from this moment to call myself your daughter.

Lady Cy. As such I have adopted you: remember now, my child, the duty you have taken on yourself, the authority you have consigned to me. All rights parental centre now in me; your happiness, your credit, your establishment, are trusts for which I am responsible.—You have no other task but to obey.

Em. Obedience, madam, has its limitations; but such as I would render to my father I'll pay to you. Have I your leave to withdraw?

Lady Cy. You may, my dear, your spirits seem to need it.—Go and compose yourself. [*Exit* EMILY.

Sir Oliv. Exquisite creature! I'm enchanted with her. By heaven! 'twould be the heighth of my ambition, the object I have most at heart in life, to see my Lionel—Oh that I cou'd!—here kneeling at her feet.—Born of such parents, trained by such instructions, and graced with charms so lovely, Emily, without a fortune, is a match for princes.

Lady Cy. If such is your disinterested wish, (and greater happiness I could not pray for,) I trust my fortune thrown into her scale will not make her appear less worthy of your nephew, or cause you to retract your good opinion.

Sir Oliv. No, surely; but I doubt if I should wish your fortune to go out of the right channel, even to Emily. We that have never married should regard our nephews as our sons.

Lady Cy. But does affinity impose on me an obligation to bestow my property on one that merits nothing, to the wrong of her that merits all?

Sir Oliv. Is that the character of Algernon? Is he so undeserving?

Lady Cy. Ah! there, my friend, there is my terror, the destiny I dread; the man of all men living the most dangerous to my peace is Algernon.

Sir Oliv. Indeed!

Lady Cy. Preserve my Emily from him—save her from Algernon!

Sir Oliv. Is Algernon then born to be a curse to both of us?

Lady Cy. Explain yourself.

Sir Oliv. He is your nephew, therefore I was silent; but if he's dangerous to your peace of mind, to mine he's fatal—in one word, the wound of which my hapless Lionel now languishes was given by the hand of Algernon.

Lady Cy. Horrible wretch!—his murderer!

Sir Oliv. I say not that; for modern courtesy gives not that name to duellists, and honour sanctifies their bloody deeds.

Lady Cy. Away with all such honour! Truth disavows it, nature revolts from it, religion denounces it.—Oh! he is born to be my shame and torment.

Sir Oliv. Be patient for a while; suspend your judgment.

Lady Cy. No, I regard a duellist with horror; I hold him as an agent of the enemy of mankind, sent to disturb society, and rend the parent's and the widow's hearts asunder. One action, one only action, and that a doubtful one, had met my ear in favour of that wretch whom I call nephew, and henceforth even that one I totally discredit, and renounce him.

Sir Oliv. Hold, I conjure you. In the midst of wrath let us remember justice. I, like you, abhor a duellist profest; yet I am taught by long experience how to make allowances for younger spirits and warmer passions, that will not submit to meet the world's contempt, and scorn its prejudices.

Lady Cy. Away! You talk this language by profession; reason declares against it.

Sir Oliv. Reason demands that we should pause in judgment. When two men draw their swords upon each other, reason will tell us one must be to

blame; but ere we fix the blame upon that one, justice decrees that we should hear them both.

Lady Cy. What says your nephew? He will speak the truth.

Sir Oliv. I should expect he would; yet I'll not wholly trust to any man's report against another in his own cause; and in this sentiment my nephew honourably coincides; for he declines all answer to my questions, and will state nothing to affect or criminate his antagonist.—Hah! who is this?

ALGERNON *enters.*

Lady Cy. Go, go! I did not send for you.

Alg. I know it; but I wish to speak in private with Sir Oliver Montrath.

Sir Oliv. With me? Who is this man? I do not know him. Is he one of your ladyship's domestics?

Lady Cy. No; he made offer of his services, but upon talking with him I perceived he had a list of grievances to state, and not being then at leisure, I believe I told him he might wait your coming, and make his suit to you.

Sir Oliv. And so he may—his looks plead in his cause. Is it your wish to speak with me, young man?

Alg. It is.

Sir Oliv. Alone?

Alg. Alone, if you'll permit it.

Sir Oliv. Freely; and when I can command my time, it shall be yours. I'll call for you.

Alg. I shall attend your summons.

[*Exit* ALGERNON.

Sir Oliv. I'm curious what this man can have to tell me. Do you conjecture?

Lady Cy. There is a mystery about him. He says he is a gentleman by birth, and so far I believe him. Of what he had to tell besides I waved the hearing, but offered him relief: that did not seem his object,

nor was it mine to take a gentleman into my service. But you will know the whole.—Shall we adjourn and see what is become of Emily?

Sir Oliv. With all my heart; and hope the mournful subject of our last interview may be no more revived. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

LAWYER EARLING, *meeting* ALGERNON.

Ear. So! Whence come you? Who are you? What's your business?

Alg. Sir, I don't know you.

Ear. Not know me? That's much. You must be new indeed.

Alg. Are you that worthy gentleman, Mr Earling?

Ear. I am the very person.

Alg. Heaven reward you! Your fame is sounded forth through all the county.

Ear. Are you not hired to wait on Miss Fitzallan?

Alg. No, sir; my character don't seem to recommend me to the lady Cypress. If you wou'd speak for me, 'twou'd make my fortune.

Ear. How can I speak for you, whom I don't know?

Alg. 'Twould be as easy as to speak against me.

Ear But I do neither: I have no concern with you or with your character.

Alg. Indeed! They told me you was famous for it.

Ear. For what is it I'm famous?

Alg For speaking about characters you've no concern with; therefore I pray you, sir, take mine in hand and do me justice. I suspect some villain has cruelly defamed me.—Doesn't an action lie for that at law?

Ear. Go! you're a fool; be gone!

Alg. I am a fool, to ask a knave for justice [*Exit.*

Ear. Knave! do you call me knave? I'll trounce you, sirrah! I'll blow you to the moon, audacious beggar!——Ah, Master Doctor, do you know that rascal?

SCUD *enters.*

Scud. I know several rascals, but which of them do you mean?

Ear. That impudent new comer; that mad fellow, that dares to insult me in my lady's house—Call me a knave indeed, and to my face!—Did you ever hear such insolence?

Scud. Never, never: If he had only said it behind your back, why, 'twere but *quid pro quo*; it would have passed: but to your face—Oh, monstrous!

Ear. I'll set him in the stocks; I'll have his ears nailed to the whipping-post.

Scud. No, don't do that: if whipping-posts had ears, they'd hear the cries of those that are tied to them, and pity them.

Ear. Pooh! you're as great a fool as he, methinks: I've done with you.—Look to yourself, Sir Gallipot: your reign will not be long on this ground, take my word for it. [*Exit.*

Scud. There, there, there! I'm blown up, ousted, all is over with me. Thought to have had my lady's custom till her death—perceive now she will be one of the few patients that outlive my prescriptions.—Oh, fine work, fine work!

ALGERNON *enters.*

Alg. How now, friend Scud; what ails you?

Scud. Friend! call me fool. I'm ruined by my friendship. You've play'd the devil's dance with that damned lawyer, and set him whip and spur upon my back.

Alg. Why, that's his proper place: back-biting is his trade.

Scud. And what's my trade, do you think? Where shall I drive it? My gallipots may grow into the shelves for everlasting, if I'm to be made the cat's-paw of your schemes and foolish Jenny's—but I'll go tell my lady all about you.

Alg. No, no; you'll not do that, my little Scud.

Scud. I'll tell you what I won't do—lose my customer.

Alg. Ay, but consider what an ornament your ears are to your head, and you'll lose them incontinently, if you betray me.

Scud. My ears indeed! Look to your own; the lawyer has sworn to nail them to the whipping-post. I've got a wig; so have not you, my master. Besides, I'm not quite certain but my lady's custom will be the greater loss.—She takes a world of physic.

SIMON SINGLE *enters.*

Sim. Who talks of physic? I've the best of medicines—a case of old canary, which my lady has ordered us to tap, and drink a welcome to our noble guest, Sir Oliver Montrath.—I've put my lips to it; 'tis supernaculum.

Scud. I see you have; I see 'tis supernaculum; for some of it has got under your wig already.

Sim. My wig; no, no; Dame Dorothy set that awry, with a kind cuff o' the ear.

Scud. You put your lips to her too, it should seem.

Sim. Perhaps I did; but that's all buckram, doctor. Ah, Henry, give me your hand. Stand fast, my gallant hearts: lo, where she comes again, a portly sail, right on upon our convoy. My life upon't, she's bound to the Canaries.

MRS DOROTHY *enters.*

Dor. Oh thou rash youth, thou hast undone thyself. Earling has vowed thy ruin.

Scud. He has vowed my ruin too, and that is one of the few vows that he will keep religiously.

Dor. Ah, he's a carnal man; he'll swallow up this castle and its fortunes.

Sim. I hope the turrets of it will stick by the way, and choak him. He sha'n't swallow the canary in it, however; we'll be before-hand with him at that sport.

Scud. I would I had the cooking of one dose for him. I wish he'd swallow that. It shou'd be a settler.

Dor. What has he done by Harry Algernon? There's malice for you; there's a batch of mischief—Blasted his character, garbled his fortune, and turned my lady's heart to stone against him.

Sim. Flint, iron, adamant—I told her so—Madam, said I, the gentleman is wronged; the neighbours where he lives all give him a good word, the gentry love him, his father doats on him, the poor adore him: there is but one bad character 'twixt him and your attorney—Judge you, said I, which party it belongs to.

Alg. Did you say this?

Sim. I did.

Alg. Then you're an honest fellow.

Sim. I know that well enough. Yes, I did say it.

Scud. How did she take it?

Sim. As she takes your physic—gulped and made wry faces; but it went down.

Scud. I hope 'twill stay by her.

Sim. I hope it will, and when we've drank confusion to attorneys, I'll deal her out another dose a little stronger. Damn it!—No, hold; I will not swear—I'll do it coolly.—Come, we'll call a council in the Canaries.

Scud. Agreed. I'll drink myself into a little courage, and have a word with the old lass myself.

Sim. Come on, my hearts! Henry, conduct the lady. You may solicit her fair hand in safety. Jerry and I have wigs. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

LADY CYPRESS, EMILY, SIR OLIVER MONTRATH, EARLING.

Lady Cy. Now, Emily, you see what misery that wicked man has brought upon us all.

Em. I'm sorry for Sir Oliver's misfortune.

Lady Cy. I hope you have also pity for the sufferer.

Em. I trust I have, for all that merit it.

Ear. I'm sure Miss Emily will not attempt to extenuate the guilt of such an action.

Em. You may be sure I never will defend a guilty person, knowing him for such: be you as careful how you criminate an absent man, till you have proofs against him. (*To* SIR OLIVER.) Sir, you are silent; I should wish to know if you have any thing to urge against him.

Sir Oliv. Nothing, my dear: I'm listening with attention, and therefore silent. I should be sorry were you less unwilling to give up your opinion of a man who rendered you such service.

Lady Cy. What service? Earling, you have heard the story; let us hear what you have to say upon it.

Ear. If Miss Fitzallan will suffer me to put a simple question to her.

Em. By all means; put your question.

Ear. When Mr Algernon, by happy chance, came

in so opportunely to her rescue, can Miss Fitzallan say what brought him thither, so far from his own home?

Em I never asked what caused him to be there, nor did he tell me.

Ear. We'll call it then a very happy chance without a cause, or a most fortunate presentiment that somewhere in that grove there would be found a damsel in the power of some vile ruffian, whom he was doomed to rescue. Some people might suppose this a collusion, but Miss Fitzallan can remove all doubts, by telling us who was the villain that offered her that violence.

Sir Oliv. Can you do this, my Emily?

Em. I cannot.

Ear. Did Mr Algernon know who he was?

Em. I do not think he did.

Ear. Did he secure his person?

Em. No; his care was wholly turned to me: the man he left upon the ground, and, as it seemed, disabled.

Ear. I have done: I leave it to the court to judge.

Lady Cy. A barefaced trick. It is too palpable.

Sir Oliv. Who can say that?—Let Mr Algernon speak for himself.

Ear. Speak!

Sir Oliv. Ay, you have spoke, and should not he? That's justice, is it not?

Ear. Did you always find it so where you have been, Sir Oliver?

Sir Oliv. Whether I found it so or not, I felt it.

Em. Now, Mr Earling, you may put those questions you've press'd on me to Mr Algernon: Perhaps he'll answer them.

Lady Cy. Emily, Emily, you forget yourself.

Em. Madam, I should, if I forbore to speak, when charges such as these are urg'd against an absent, therefore a defenceless man. You have not allow'd

him to approach you, madam: this gentleman, equally unknown to him, prejudges him at once; he is ingenious to find out bad motives for good actions: there's not a virtue in the human heart but may be metamorphosed by such cunning into a vice. Sir Oliver has said, and said it in the language of a hero—Let Mr Algernon speak for himself.

Sir Oliv. And I repeat those words—Let him be heard!—However circumstances bear against him, and wretched though he has made me, still I hold it matter of conscience never to prejudge, however strong the grounds of my suspicion.

Lady Cy. Sir Oliver, we do not think alike, and therefore, with your leave, we'll cut this subject short. Emily will retire—a little recollection will be useful to shew the error of some rash opinions, and amend them. Go, child: remember I have now a right to look for the obedience of a daughter.

Em. And I to expect the mildness of a mother.

[*Exit.*

Lady Cy. And now, Sir Oliver, with your permission I will dispatch a little business with my agent, and leave you to fulfil your promise to that young man, who I perceive is waiting to approach you. Follow me, Mr Earling.

[*Exeunt* LADY CYPRESS *and* EARLING.

Sir Oliv. See here a sample of the blessings of dependence!—Poor orphan Emily, 'tis now my turn to prove that I am worthy to be called friend of thy gallant father.

ALGERNON *appears.*

Oh! come in, come in, young man! I promised you a hearing, and I'll make good my word; but as my mind is pressed with many matters, be short, and to the point.

Alg. I will. Your nephew has had an affair with Mr Algernon, and is wounded. You have visited

him, no doubt. Has he related to you the particulars of that unpleasant business?

Sir Oliv. Before I answer, let me know who it is that questions me.

Alg. My father lives upon the lands of Sir George Algernon, and I have some acquaintance with his son, the person whose unlucky chance it was to wound your nephew.

Sir Oliv. And what's your motive for the question that you now put to me?

Alg. I am no stranger to your character, and if you know the circumstances of that duel, I trust you will not suffer Mr Earling to misrepresent them to the lady Cypress.

Sir Oliv. Certainly I shou'd not, if I knew the truth, suffer it to be disguised; but I have no particulars from my nephew. The affair remains a mystery. Can you develope it?

Alg. If Lady Cypress will permit me to stay this night, as she has promised, and you can bring me to an explanation with her in your presence, I can so far elucidate this mystery, that if you still persist to trace it home, you shall have full possession of the means.

Sir Oliv. I hardly should expect it at your hands; nor where my nephew's honour is concerned shall I be easily induced to listen to other evidence than that of facts incontrovertibly attested, and (I am free to say) admitted on his part.

Alg. 'Tis to such facts and such authorities I shall appeal.

Sir Oliv. And do you mean to criminate my nephew?

Alg. Pardon me, sir: I have no other meaning but to declare the truth.

Sir Oliv. Have you the means to know it? Were you present at the rencontre?

Alg. If it appears that I have not the means to

know the truth, or knowingly disguise it, treat me as I deserve; I'm in your hands.

Sir Oliv. Well, sir, I'll urge no further questions on you, but use my interest with the lady Cypress to procure you the interview you wish. Now fail not on your part: you know me, sir; I trust to you unknown.

Alg. Poor as I seem, I have a soul within that never yet was tainted by dishonour. [*Exeunt severally.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

LADY CYPRESS, EMILY FITZALLAN, *and* EARLING.

Lady Cy. Well, child, I have here the instrument that makes you rich above the dreams of avarice. I have not executed it, for that depends on you; I have not cancelled it, because this gentleman, your steady friend, has interceded with me to recal you once more to recollection and atonement.

Em. For what must I atone?

Lady Cy. For your intemperate defence of Algernon. Guilty or innocent, no more of him! Where I bestow my fortune I expect to find no opposition to my will in the disposal of it.

Em. What is your will in that respect?

Lady Cy. This is my will—If Lionel Montrath survives his wound, he is the man I destine for my heiress. To this if you declare instant assent, I shall as instantly confirm this paper; if not, I cancel it, and cast you off.

Em. Not all the world could bribe me to do that, before I know which is the offending party. What baseness, what ingratitude were mine, to give my hand to him that wrong'd the brave preserver of my life and honour!

Lady Cy. Obstinate girl, you have no such preserver. Have not I told you it was mere collusion?

Em. Madam, you have; but I am not convinced, because you told me so by your attorney, not from your own knowledge and conviction.

Lady Cy. What will convince you?

Em. Proof well established, and all parties heard.

Lady Cy. You to make terms, that called yourself my daughter! Where is your duty?

Em. Inviolate, unbroken.—I shall ever bear you respect and true devotion for your goodness; but no parent, no patroness, not even my father, to whose awful spirit I now appeal, could have the power, or could possess the right to tear away affections from my heart, which honour, gratitude, have planted there, or force me to conspire with that bad man in stripping Algernon of fame and fortune, and fixing artifice, deceit, and murder upon a man so near to you in blood, in nature so abhorrent of those crimes.

Lady Cy. You are mad. I have done with you; I cast you off. Now, Mr Earling, take away your papers; they, or the thankless object they allude to, must be entirely changed before I sign them. [*Exit.*

Ear. Miss Emily, it grieves me to the heart to have heard what now has passed. Indeed you wrong me, if you suppose I am the author of this fatal breach. I am no otherwise the enemy of Mr Algernon than as I am your friend: in very truth, I'm not his enemy.

Em. Sir, for your enmity to Mr Algernon, and so much of your friendship as flows from it, I pray you let them go together; I have no use for either.

Ear. Do you scorn me because I pity you?

Em. You pity me! There cannot be that state of human wretchedness which could reduce me to accept your pity. I wonder you can waste your time with one who neither courts your favour, fears your power, nor credits your professions.

Ear. Well, haughty madam, I have been a friend, and I can be a foe. [*Exit.*

ALGERNON *enters.*

Alg. My Emily, my angel, what is this I've heard? Discarded, disinherited—and for your generosity to me!

Em. Yes, Algernon, I'm poor, but free. I was a prisoner in a gaudy cage, where they wou'd fain have taught me to call names, and whistle to a tune of Earling's making; but being a bad bird, and obstinate, my keeper let me fly; and now I've got the wide world for my portion, and nothing but my own small wits to trust to for picking up a living.

Alg. Fly to me; perch on my breast, for in my heart you'll find both shelter and affection.

Em. Ah, that is generous, gallant, like yourself; but 'tis not yet a time for me to hear you. The asylum that you offer is attacked, the very citadel of your life and honour is besieged by assailants, and you must beat them off, my hero, or I have sacrificed myself to ruin, without the enjoyment of that honest pride which glories in the cause for which it suffers.

Alg. Doubt me not, Emily: the shield of truth covers my breast, and I'm invulnerable.

Em. Earling accuses you of a collusion with my unknown assailant in the wood.

Alg. I'm armed against that charge.

Em. And for your wounding of Montrath, he calls

it assassination—There I shou'd fear you are not so well armed, having no seconds to appeal to, and therefore more exposed to his attack.

Alg. Let him come on; at all points I defy him. Now, my sweet advocate, repose in peace, and wait the event.

Em. Farewell! If I am ruined in the cause of truth, I'll not regret the sacrifice. [*Exit.*

Alg. Heroic Emily, how I adore you!—Hah! Jerry, whence come you?

JERRY SCUD *enters.*

Scud. From the Canaries, where the illustrious major-domo governs, and drinking is a duty by the laws of the sage Solon of the cellars, the profound Diogenes of the tubs, of whose academy I am a member.

Alg. You've not betrayed me in your cups, I hope.

Scud. Betrayed you! No; if you had fired the house, burnt the old lady in it, and violated the virgin purity of Dame Buckram, I'd not betray you—Damn it! I scorn a sneaker; I loath him worse than physic.—Go on, my boy, and fear not—I am steady.

Alg. Pretty well for that. You've had a sip or two with honest Simon.

Scud. Simon's a fish; Dame Buckram is a leech; fills where she fastens, and delights in suction: I honour her for her absorbent qualities; and I pronounce that they are silly apes and ignoramusses that say wine gets into the head—'tis false—I say it gets into the heart; it drives ill humour, melancholy, treason, and a whole gang of cowardly companions out of a man, as a carminative does crudities and indigestion: It would have set my constitution clear, only there's one thing sticks.

Alg. What's that, my honest fellow? Out with it.

Scud. Why then, 'tis jealousy—and that, you know, is a confounded spasm.

Alg. Away with it at once! Why, man, you don't know half your happiness; you have the best wife in the country—Oh! if you could have heard her pine for you last night: she wou'dn't hear of comfort.

Scud. Indeed, indeed! May I believe you, squire? May I be sure I'm not the horned beast?

Alg. None of my making, Jerry, on my honour.

Scud. O jubilate! then I kick the clouds. Good bye, good bye to you. Let me embrace you. All luck attend you. I'm going to my lady: if I can throw in a provocative to stir her in your favour, I will do it: I will, upon my soul! Good bye to you.

Alg. Stop, Jerry; hold your hand, my gallant fellow! I am too much your friend to let you go to Lady Cypress in your present state. Why, man, you are tipsey.

Scud. Say drunk, and you'll not say more than is true; but then it is I cure my patients: when I am only sober, I let them cure themselves. [*Exit.*

Alg. Well, get you gone: I am not bound to find reason for him that will not keep his own.

[*Exit* ALG.

SCENE II.

LADY CYPRESS, RACHEL WILLIAMS.

Lady Cy. Come hither, Rachel; I would speak with you. When I promoted you to be about the person of Miss Emily Fitzallan, it was because I saw you was attached to her, and I was willing to do her a grace, by thus preferring you. If you must now fall back into your station, it is not that I have withdrawn my favour from you, but from your mistress.

Rac. I know it, madam; all your people know it, for Mr Earling has announced it to us; but I must beg your ladyship to excuse me if I decline all service but Miss Emily's.

Lady Cy. What should enable her to keep a servant?

Rac. Then she will stand in the more need of me: I'll work my fingers to the bone to serve her. Your ladyship may turn me from your doors, but I will say that Mr Earling's a base, cruel man, and when he has driven all your relations from you, your ladyship will find your house a desert, and nothing but a villain left within it. [*Exit.*

Lady Cy. Out of my sight! be gone! Such insolence is not to be endured—yet Earling is to blame, to publish this to all my family. So! what comes next?

MRS BUCKRAM *enters.*

Buck. Madam, I've served your ladyship too long to bear the arrogance of Mr Earling. I beg to be discharged. I'll not live in the house with one who drives Miss Emily out of your doors, tells such monstrous lies of Mr Algernon, and sets your ladyship against all your friends and relations

Lady Cy. Who made you a judge in matters that concern me only? When you are cool I'll hear you. I know you have been junketing and caballing with Rachel Williams and the rest of them.—Pr'ythee retire.

Buck. That's what I mean to do, and others beside me, or I'm mistaken. We respect your ladyship, but we can't put up with your attorney. [*Exit.*

EARLING *enters whilst this is saying.*

Lady Cy. There, Mr Earling, you hear what is said against you—Murmurs, complaints, invectives from all quarters.

Ear. No wonder, when that Henry Scudamore, whom I suspect to be a secret agent of your unworthy nephew's, sets them on to blacken and arraign me. Madam, he has had the insolence to give me the worst of names.

Lady Cy. Then give him his dismission—send him away at once.

Ear. It shall be done. [*Exit* EARLING.

Lady Cy. Oh that Sir Oliver had postponed his visit to his nephew but one hour!

SCUD *appears.*

Ah, pr'ythee, pr'ythee, do not plague me now. What brings you hither?

Scud. Duty, my lady, duty—want to hear how the draughts have agreed.

Lady Cy. 'Tis plain how your draughts have agreed—the operation's visible: no matter about mine.

Scud. Oh, pardon me: there is great matter—Spared for no pains—employed the best of drugs—hope I have given content—but rumours fly—no parrying defamation—a man may be accused behind his back, and who can stand it?

Lady Cy. What rumours do you allude to? Who has accused you?

Scud. I don't know who may have accused me, my lady: I wish to heaven I cou'd say I have accused nobody.

Lady Cy. What do you mean?

Scud. Oh dear, madam, I am troubled with the heart-ache; I have a lacerated conscience.

Lady Cy. You have a loaded head, I perceive; more wine in it than wit.

Scud. True, my lady; it is so full I can no longer hide the truth within it. Out it must come; and true it is, I have slandered Mr Algernon. He saved my life, and I have stabbed his character.

Lady Cy. You don't know what you say—you're tipsey.

Scud. I wish I had been tipsey when I spoke of him; then I shou'd have told the truth.

Lady Cy. Go your ways; get you gone! A man that is in two stories should be credited for neither. You made him out to me a compound of all vices.

Scud. That was the very vilest compound that ever came out of my hands; but Lawyer Earling put a lie into my mouth, and, like a gilded pill, of loathsome quality, I swallowed it, and now it makes me sick.

Lady Cy. Be gone! I will no longer be insulted with your apothecary's jargon. Never enter my doors again.

Scud. I hope your ladyship will give me leave to enter my own. Oh honesty, honesty! It's very pleasant to speak the truth, but a man is sure to lose his customers by it. [*Exit* SCUD.

SIMON SINGLE *enters.*

Lady Cy. Hey-day, Simon! and you too! I'll have my cellar doors wall'd up, if I am to be troubled with all the tipsey companions that resort to them.

Sim. Venerable lady, I am not inebriated. What I may be, if you wall up your cellar doors, and me within them, I can't pretend to say. I may in that case drink to support life, as I have now been tasting a glass, by your permission, to celebrate this mournful festival.

Lady Cy. How can it be a festival and mournful? You know not what you say.

Sim. Pardon me, pardon me, most incomparable lady. A festival it must be, because you are pleased to order us to be merry—Mournful it surely is, because your attorney makes us sad.

Lady Cy. You see he is in my interest, and you are all in a league against him.

Sim. No, no, no, my lady; 'tis not because he is

in your interest we are leagued against him—your interest has been ever dearer to me than my own. If you turn me out of your doors this night, I can lay my hand upon my heart, and appeal to the Giver of it, that I never wronged you of a farthing; and, though a poor servant, scorn to cringe, and lie, and vilify an absent man, as he has done. Madam, you are abused: the county would rise up against him, if they knew what he has said of Mr Algernon—so much is your nephew beloved.

Lady Cy. Come, come, I know who tells you so —'tis Henry Scudamore, and no one else.

Sim. Pray, madam, be no more deceived, but hear and judge for yourself. If it was the last word I had to utter, I wou'd say, and say it to his face, that Lawyer Earling is a falsifier and a defamer.

Lady Cy. Go, stop him from discharging Henry Scudamore; don't let him leave the house till I have seen him. [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE III.

EARLING *enters.*

Ear. Where is this Henry Scudamore? I've hunted the whole house over for the fellow. If he is not driven out before this night, my post will not be tenable to-morrow: we shall have Algernon brought in in triumph upon the shoulders of his partisans, and all my labours blasted in a moment. Hah! here's the man of all men for my purpose: this surly fellow has the mastiff's property; shew him his prey, and he will fasten on it.——

FRANK *enters.*

Come hither, Frank ; a word with you.

Frank. What is your pleasure, master ?

Ear. Do you know a loose fellow, an interloper, that came to seek a place, but brought no character ; a vagabond, it shou'd seem, that calls himself Henry Scudamore ?

Frank. Yes, I know Henry Scudamore.

Ear. Well, honest Frank, you see that he came here for no good purpose ; and it is not fit he shou'd be let to stay and take the bread out of the mouths of better than himself.

Frank. There's bread enough for all of us, methinks.

Ear. What then ? what then ? You're not a man, we'll hope, to be afraid of such a wafer cake as he is, Frank ?

Frank. I'm afraid of no man.

Ear. Why then, my hearty Frank, I give you orders to turn him bodily out of this house, for which I have my lady's authority.

Frank. What has he done, that I shou'd turn him out ?

Ear. He has insulted me, traduced my character, and set me at defiance.

Frank. Has he done this ?

Ear. He has.

Frank. Then let him stay for me—I will not touch him ; I honour him for his spirit. They call me surly Frank, and so I am, if any man affronts me but I'll be no attorney's catch-pole, look ye ! And as for turning out, if that's your game, there's but one man I'll do that office for, and that's yourself, my master—There you have it. [*Exit*

Ear. Impudent varlet ! The contagion's general, if he has caught it. The whole swarm's upon me, and I must stand their buzzing : as for their stings,

I'm not in fear of them, so long as I can keep the queen of the hive in my possession.

ALGERNON *enters.*

Oho! I have lit upon you at last. Hark ye, sir; you Henry Scudamore, whom nobody knows, decamp; pack up your wallet, and betake yourself nobody cares whither. Off! The lady Cypress warns you off—Be gone!

Alg. Go back, and say to Lady Cypress, when she sends her warning by a proper messenger, I will obey her.

Ear. Why, who am I? What do you take me for?

Alg. A wretch beneath my notice—a defamer.

SIMON *enters.*

Sim. Well met, friend Henry: 'tis my lady's orders that you don't leave the house 'till she has seen you.

Ear. Sot, you are drunk. You never had such orders.

Sim. I had no orders—very well! And I'm a sot; I'm drunk—why, very well!—So much for me; now for yourself—You are no sot; you're sober Mr Earling the attorney; you're never drunk, for no man will drink with you; you never make mistakes about your orders, for you are under orders from the old one never to speak the truth, and faithfully adhere to your instructions.

Ear. This to my face?

Sim. Oh yes; I never saw a face better entitled to the compliment. I only wish to see it face to face with Harry Algernon, and then perhaps your face may be promoted where I may treat it with an egg or two.

Alg. Go, go, unhappy man; it can't be pleasant to hear yourself described so faithfully.

Ear. I'll not go—I summon you before the lady

Cypress—she'll do me justice—she'll avenge my wrongs. Here comes Sir Oliver—I appeal to him.

SIR OLIVER *enters.*

Sir Oliv. What is the matter?

Ear. These fellows have insulted me most grossly.

Sir Oliv. You are a lawyer. You have your redress.

Ear. Sir, 'tis above redress by any law.

Sir Oliv. Then put it up, and seek redress from patience: that is a remedy for all complaints.

Ear. I hope I've better remedies than patience—I warrant I'll exterminate these insolents: I'll pluck 'em root and branch out of this house, and hurl 'em to the dunghill that they sprung from.

Sir Oliv. Go then and set about it. Leave me, sir: I've business with this gentleman.

Ear. This gentleman, forsooth! this gentleman— [*Exit.*

Sim. Well, he may be a gentleman for me, only he lets the bottle stand too long, and takes no pity on his company, that wish to give it motion—that's not quite like a gentleman, methinks—else he may be a sober sort of a gentleman—but not a lord—no, no; at least he'll never be as drunk as a lord. [*Exit.*

Sir Oliv. Now, sir, I've seen my nephew since we last convers'd. You ask'd me then if I had been inform'd of the particulars of that rencontre, and by the motives you assigned for the inquiry, I should suppose you know some circumstances of that dark affair.

Alg. The whole correctly.

Sir Oliv. Indeed! I hardly shou'd have thought that Mr Algernon wou'd have revealed the whole to any but his nearest and most confidential friend.

Alg. Nor has he; it remains still in his bosom an inviolable secret, though known to me.

Sir Oliv. You mean to say that secrets in your

keeping are secure. I have my nephew's story, as you have Algernon's, and shou'd be glad, with your consent, to compare them with each other.

Alg. They cannot differ, for my account is drawn up by your nephew, and being signed by him, he neither can, nor will depart from it.

Sir Oliv. You much amaze me, sir, that Mr Algernon shou'd give a paper of such consequence out of his hand. I greatly wish to see it.

Alg. Wou'd it relieve your mind at the same time to see and talk with Algernon himself?

Sir Oliv. Oh, infinitely, if I cou'd obtain it.

Alg. Then with a man of honour 'twou'd be mean to trifle any longer—I am Algernon.

Sir Oliv. How!—Algernon!—May I believe you?

Alg. You shall not doubt me.—There's your nephew's paper—No eye but yours has seen it from my hand.

Sir Oliv. Sir!—Mr Algernon—I ask your pardon—I am satisfied—but can you be unknown, and in this house?

Alg. I never entered it before this day, nor, to my knowledge, ever saw my aunt 'till I appeared before her in this habit, which I shall now put off. But hark! we shall be interrupted here—Can't we retire to a more private place?

Sir Oliv. To my apartment—if you'll be pleased to follow me.—Ah, sir, ah, Mr Algernon, how hard to find, now, at the close of a long life of services, all its enjoyments, all its labours lost! [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

The Castle Hall.

JERRY SCUD *and* JENNY.

Scud. Well, well, well, jewel Jenny, here we are for the last time: farewell visits, to be sure, are melancholy matters; but we have many good friends in the castle still, and though I am thrown out of the cabinet, I have kept up my interest in the kitchen.

Jen. Ay, and in the county too, when it shall be known that you have forfeited my lady's favour by speaking up for Mr Algernon: he is so much pitied and beloved by all men, that your neighbours will sham sick on purpose to employ you.

Scud. To say the truth, I have sometimes thought that was my lady's only complaint; but I took care my physic should not cure her of it; and my comfort is, that nobody of the faculty will profit by my loss; for when she leaves off my medicines, she'll find herself too well to employ a doctor.

Jen. Come, come, Jerry, she'll not leave off you nor your medicines. If you can get to the speech

of her, a little coaxing and a submissive apology will set all things right.

Scud. No, no, jewel Jenny, she'll hear no apology, and therefore I have expressed myself more at large in my bill—Here it is, here it is—It's a bouncer; isn't it?

Jen. Yes, marry: if she has patience to go through this, she'll find you have enough to say for yourself: but I suspect, Jerry, this argument is a little too much on one side.

Scud. Turn over the leaf, and you'll find a great deal more on the other side.

SIMON SINGLE *and* MRS DOROTHY BUCKRAM *enter.*

Ah, my good friends, my good friends! this is the most doleful visit I ever made to the castle. Jenny can witness I have passed a sleepless night: that incubus of an attorney rode upon me like the night-mare.

Buck. Rode indeed! Set a beggar on horseback, and where will he not ride?

Scud. I attempted to put a cracker under his tail, but it burst in my hand, and I only burnt my own fingers, without singing him.

Sim. Let him go; the road he travels is all down-hill, and when he comes to his journey's end, he'll find those that will put crackers enough under his tail, I warrant me.

Dor. As for me, a jackdaw in a cage has a better life of it than I have, for he may cry rogue, and not be chidden for it—We shall all be turned away: I lay my account to be sent going for one.

Sim. Thirty years I have passed within these walls, and I would sooner pass the rest of my days within the walls of a prison than live in a house where scurrility is caressed, and plain speaking turned out of doors.—Hah! who comes here?

ALGERNON *enters in his own Dress.*

Buck. Bless the good mark! our Henry—No—Yes, sure 'tis Henry. How comes this to pass?

Alg. I'm ordered to attend upon my lady, so I put on my best.

Sim. Hark ye, my friend, if it is not your own, bad is your best. Let us have no false feathers. Where did you get this suit?

Alg. 'Tis Harry Algernon's: He and I wear the same clothes: one tailor serves us both—Isn't it true, Jerry?

Scud. It is, it is; and the same measure fits you.

Sim. I don't know what you mean.

Alg. Then I'll inform you. Here are but two of you in company that do not know me; you are both my friends, my generous, zealous friends, for which I thank you, and come in person hither to convince you that Algernon is not that worthless man which calumny has painted him to be.

Buck. Heaven's grace light on you, if indeed you are that injured gentleman.

Scud. Oh, by my soul, he is the very man! you may take that upon my word for truth.

Sim. I saw it; I said it; I knew he was a gentleman. Now we have got that attorney in a trap.

Jen. Yes, yes, he'll make that Earling shrink into his hole.

Sim. Hang him, pole-cat, I'll smoke him out of it. Oh! the inconceivable lies that miscreant has told of a gentleman he does not know even by sight. I pray you, sir, don't discover yourself to him till we have had him up before my lady—Methinks I hear her say, Simon, I am convinced that lawyer is a rascal—Turn him out!

Buck. Ay, we'll all lend a helping hand to that.

Scud. Yes, or a helping foot, if that is wanted. I have one at his service.

Sim. Bless you, my worthy master, bless you heartily! I hope I have said nothing to affront you. I was a little by the head just now, but that's over.

Alg. So is not my remembrance. I shall ever prize you as my best of friends.

Sim. Lord love you! We are all your friends; we are all Algernons and Anti-Earlings.

Buck. And when the election comes, we'll wear your colours.

Scud. Only put me in office on that day: let me be surgeon-general to the enemy, and I'll engage they shall have more freeholders in the hospital than at the hustings. I'll scour their consciences, I warrant me.

Alg. Now, my good friends, keep secret what has passed, and wait the event in silence.—Here comes one, a gentle advocate, whom I would fain speak to apart.

Sim. We are gone; we are gone! All happiness befal you! [*Exeunt all but* ALGERNON.

EMILY FITZALLAN *enters.*

Em. Bless me! you've changed your habit.

Alg. Yes, my charmer—In chace 'tis lawful to hang out false colours, but when we are cleared, and going into action, we must shew what we are.

Em. Right, and where Truth unfolds her standard, Victory must follow.

Alg. And what should follow Victory? What but the glorious prize for which I struggle? That prize which Fortune, aiming to impoverish, has only made more rich in my esteem—that generous heart, that sacrificed for me interest, for which so many sacrifice themselves. Now call to mind those words so heavenly sweet, which you left with me whilst the ingenuous blush glowed on your cheek—Henry, I live for you!

Em. Ah! that was then the only way I had to

reinstate you in your property; and though it cost a blush to say those words, still I could say them, for I scorned to rob you—but to repeat them now would be—Oh Heaven!—it would be every thing but false, my Henry.

Alg. Then let me take that truth into a heart of which no human power can dispossess you.

Em. I hope not, Henry; for take that away, and I am poor indeed.

Alg. 'Tis yours for ever—and believe me, dear one, if my too credulous aunt has not outlived her reason, she will see the injustice of her own decisions, and revoke them. For my exclusion she may have some plea: Our families have been at suit for years, and law will cut asunder closer ties than those existing between her and me; but of her motives for discarding you, take my word, Emily, she'll soon repent.

Em. It is not that I fear her worthless favourite: the wretch has brought a storm upon his head, and has already had some heavy shocks—but my worst fears point to another quarter.

Alg. I understand you. 'Tis Montrath you dread.

Em. I could not temporize; I spoke too plainly. Indignant of the claim she made upon me, I set her power too boldly at defiance, and challeng'd her to cancel her bequest.

Alg. You must consult Sir Oliver upon this. I cannot speak upon Montrath's affair even to you.

Em. I see you either cannot or you will not, therefore I ask no questions; well persuaded you never would take arms against the life of any man, and know yourself in fault.

Alg. I hope I sha'n't be found to have so done.—But look! here comes Sir Oliver.—I'll leave you: he may perhaps be less reserved than I am.

[*Exit* ALGERNON.

SIR OLIVER MONTRATH *enters.*

Sir Oliv. Was not that Algernon?

Em. You know him, sir, it seems.

Sir Oliv. I think I do; I have cause to know him.

Em. Ah, sir, you speak so mournfully, I fear you have found no comfort in your visit to your nephew.

Sir Oliv. Small comfort—Yet the danger of his wound is much abated.

Em. Then I'm afraid you have, or think you have, some cause of anger against Algernon.

Sir Oliv. No, Emily, no anger against him. You cannot think too well of Algernon, though I could wish you had not put your thoughts in language quite so warm.

Em. 'Twas indiscreet; but that defamer urg'd me, and put me off my guard.

Sir Oliv. Could not you find another and a stronger cause that put you off your guard? Is there not a certain passion, which our hearts are subject to, that neither keeps a guard upon itself, nor suffers any to be kept against it?

Em. If I should answer that as truth would prompt me, shou'd not I expose myself to another reproof, for want of caution?

Sir Oliv. No; for so far from thinking, with my lady, that you have chosen ill, I think, with you, that you could no where make a better choice—And more than this—was your brave father living, and knew what I know of your Algernon, he would approve your judgment.

Em. As I am sure you would not give that name but to a sacred truth, what you have said sanctions the character of Algernon—but does it warrant me in suffering him to make a sacrifice of interest, by marrying a beggar?

Sir Oliv. You point the question wrong, and should have asked if it exculpates me, your father's

friend, for suffering you to call yourself a beggar.—No, my dear child, it does not, nor will I permit it to be said, the daughter of the generous Fitzallan, who in the battle found me faint with wounds, and whilst he cover'd me received his death, wanted that dross which I abounded in.—This, Emily, this never shall be said; so come with me, and don't oppose one word to my resolves; for in an act of honour I will pause at no man's bidding; no, my pretty one, nor yet at any woman's, though grac'd with all the charms that Heaven can give her. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

EARLING *alone.*

Ear. Now, Fortune, one kind lift, and I am landed. So far success goes with me. I have nothing more to fear from Emily; that pert, proud miss is silenc'd and thrown by. It now remains to sweep those menial vermin out of my way; those insects that annoy me. Old Sir Oliver, that blusters about justice, is a hypocrite; he cannot be a friend to Algernon, and yet he troubles me, takes up my seat at table, occupies the ear of the old lady, and obstructs my suit, which stood so fair, that if I could but seize one lucky moment, one fair opportunity—Hah! I have found it.—Here she comes alone.—Now, impudence befriend me!

LADY CYPRESS *enters.*

Lady Cy. So, Mr Earling! Much as I love peace; I will not purchase it by mean concessions; I will not suffer the gentleman I esteem and trust to be

affronted by my saucy servants; they shall atone, or troop.

Ear. Most amiable, most excellent of ladies, whom with my heart I serve, honour, obey, and worship, I want words to speak my gratitude.—Thus at your feet, in humble adoration, let me seal on this dear hand the pledge, the sacred pledge, of my unutterable, my unbounded love.

SIMON *and* DOROTHY *enter.*

Sim. Look, Dorothy, the devil's at his prayers.

Dor. I hope they're his last prayers.

Ear. Curse on their coming! What a moment lost! Madam, do you permit your menial servants thus to break in upon your private moments?

Lady Cy. Why not? If you have any thing to add to your last speech, I shall not interrupt it. You may resume your posture, and go on.

Ear. Madam, I cannot.

Lady Cy. I can help your memory, if you have lost the word. 'Twas love, unbounded love. When you had gone so far out of all bounds, all measure of respect, can the appearance of these silly people deter you from proceeding?

Ear. Madam, if you're offended, I have done. I'll humbly take my leave.

Lady Cy. No, sir, I must insist upon your staying. Though you are foil'd to add a single word to insolence so perfect and complete, yet you shall not be robb'd of your just right, that Nature gives you, to be heard in vindication of your own assertions. If you have spoke the truth, and nothing but the truth, of Algernon, his character cannot be rescued, let the fate of yours be what it may.

Sim. Any thing the matter, Mr Attorney? Afraid you are not quite well just now. You look a little pale.

Lady Cy. Hold your tongue, foolish fellow! You,

Simon, in the first place, and you next, mistress, who dare to tell me I am the dupe of false impressions, are you not both ashamed to look this injur'd gentleman in the face?

Sim. It is a face to make a man asham'd, and we did blush to see him on his knees before your ladyship.

Lady Cy. That's my affair: fall down on yours, and ask forgiveness of him.

Sim. Pray, madam, don't command me to do that, for fear I never should forgive myself.—I ask your pardon for approaching you when I was tipsey, but you bade me drink, and I was over eager to obey you.

Lady Cy. That's easily forgiven; but your abuse of this gentleman, whom I must still call the friend of truth, is monstrous.

Sim. Madam, if that gentleman is the friend of truth, he makes very free with his friend, truly. I only said he told lies to your ladyship: That's no abuse, for here come those can prove it.

Enter SIR OLIVER MONTRATH *and* EMILY.

Ear. My evil genius! What does he do here?

Sir Oliv. Forgive me, my good lady, if I come to atone to you and this fair advocate for my unjust suspicions of your nephew. I have one here waiting, who'll confront that gentleman his accuser, and, I trust, remove some false impressions that your ladyship may have imbibed from his unfounded charges. Come in, sir, if you please.

ALGERNON *enters.*

Lady Cy. How now! Who's this? Henry!

Sir Oliv. I claim your promise to give him hearing.

Ear. I protest against him: that fellow's an impostor: we shall not listen to his evidence.

Lady Cy. He first came here humbly to ask for service, pleaded decay, and said he was a gentleman by birth; I pitied him, and offered him relief. He now has chang'd his dress, shifted his character, and claims to be an advocate for Algernon. These are suspicious circumstances, and I should have some better reasons for believing him than I am yet possessed of. Do you know any such, Sir Oliver?

Ear. Ay, sir, do you know who this champion is?

Sir Oliv. Sir, give me leave to ask—Do you?

Ear. Not I; I know him not.

Sir Oliv. Yet you know Algernon; are intimate with all his habits, frailties, faults, offences; have look'd into his heart, and kindly told the secrets you discovered.—Oh thou slanderer! Now look him in the face, and prove your charge.—Well may you start.—Mark his confusion, madam!—This is your nephew; this is Algernon.

Em. Yes, on my honour, and my brave preserver.

Lady Cy. I am confounded.—Where is that defamer?

Sim. Madam, he has stept aside, to mend a flaw in his indictment.—How do you do, Mr Attorney? Come forward, if you please, and get acquainted with this gentleman's face. You knew him well enough behind his back.

Lady Cy. Peace! Let me hear what Algernon will say in his own cause.

Sir Oliv. Speak for yourself, brave Algernon.

Alg. I am that exil'd man, whom, on the word of this defamer, though unknown to him even by sight, it seems, you have proscrib'd. Despairing of admission to your presence, and driven in self-defence on this resource, I took a counterfeited character, and saw what I had never been allow'd to approach—your person. Much I wish'd to speak in mitigation of your prejudice, and give a plain recital of my wrongs;

but you had then no ear for such discourse, and I was told to wait your better leisure.

Lady Cy. All this is true—Proceed.

Alg. A friend here present told me I was accus'd to you of various crimes and gross enormities. I plead to failings, to the common errors and indiscretions youth is subject to, but, I trust, I have never degraded my character, or debased my principles. I am no gamester, as he makes me to be; no dissipater of my paternal fortune, as he insinuates; no libertine, as he asserts; and, let me add, in the hearing of Sir Oliver Montrath, I am no assassin.

Sir Oliv. It is now my duty, and a painful one I feel it, to bring to light, in vindication of an injur'd character, the guilty person, for whose shameful act no better palliation can be found than temporary madness and intoxication. The monster from whose brutal violence the purest of Heaven's creatures was preserv'd by Algernon—how shall I speak it without shame and horror?—was Lionel Montrath!

Lady Cy. I am confounded and amaz'd. Montrath!—This, if not told by you, Sir Oliver, would mock belief.

Sir Oliv. Your nephew was too noble to disclose it, though he has in his hands a written paper, sign'd by the offender, for his vindication. This, I believe, he never has discovered, even to that lady, though a party in it.

Ear. Never, but constantly evaded my inquiries.

Sir Oliv. To this when I shall add, that my rash nephew forc'd the duel on him, in consequence of blows exchang'd between them, I trust I may with safety rest his cause upon the facts adduc'd—unless indeed this gentleman has any other charge, which in his modesty he will prefer

Ear. You'll not draw any thing from me, Sir Oliver: You may talk on; I prefer silence.

Sir Oliv. You are right; 'tis time your tongue had some repose.

Lady Cy. Pray do not keep him longer in my sight. My nephew does not seem to hold him worthy of a retort.

Alg. No, madam, I have nothing to return him for his malicious slander, but my contempt.

Lady Cy. If he can feel, 'tis punishment enough.

Sir Oliv. Be gone! your infamy go with you; and may no part of it adhere to your profession.

Ear. Let my profession look to itself—There are some understandings in this world, made, it should seem, by Nature to be duped. Had you not been so easy of belief, I had not been so forward to deceive you. Now put what name you will upon my conduct, there are such glaring instances in point, of dealers in seduction, infamy, and false impressions on credulity, as make my shame no wonder. [*Exit.*

Lady Cy. Now, Henry, you've appealed to me for justice—hear my decree. There is your destiny; that is the prize which you have nobly earn'd. My heart, so long estrang'd, is now your own. You are my son, and Emily my daughter; all I possess is yours—Have I aton'd?

Alg. Oh! you have given me that which might atone for all the pains mortality could feel—beauty to charm me, talents to enchant, and truth to fix my happiness secure.

Em. Oh, Henry, bear me to my benefactress, and let me kneel.

Lady Cy. Yes, I will let you kneel, my child, for now thou hast a treasure worth thy thanks.—Be virtuous, loving, faithful to each other; ape not the fashions of this guilty world; seek pleasures where alone they can be found, in nuptial harmony, domestic duties, and that sweet reflection which fortune well employ'd is sure to give.—Rise, my adopted, rise!

Sir Oliv. Oh, let me add a blessing—May you be —Well, well, it will not forth; my heart's too full; but I will send it up in thought towards heaven.—Here, Emily, my love, I'll put the first chain on your bridal arm: they are pure pearls, my child; not spoils of war, but gifts of gratitude for life preserv'd—wear them for my sake, and when I am dead, cast a kind look upon them, and drop one pearly tear, richer than them all, to the memory of old Oliver.

Em. Oh, sir, sir, sir—my father and my friend!

Sir Oliv. So, so! no more. Henry, my gallant boy, give me your hand—a soldier's greeting after victory—time was I could have grasp'd it harder.

Alg. I accept it, and press it to my heart.

Lady Cy. Where are you all? This is a day of joy. Simon, I look to you to oil the hinges of my castle gates, that they may open freely to the neighbours, the tenants, and the poor.

Sim. I'll make 'em swing, to please you; and for one bad man now gone out of them, a hundred good ones shall come in, I warrant me.

Lady Cy. You, Dorothy, must set the girls a-dancing; and you, Rachel, must lead the ball, in honour of your mistress.

SCUD *and* JENNY, *who had crept in behind the servants, now step forward.*

Scud. And when the bumpkins caper and kick shins, may they not want a plaster, good my lady? I'll cure them gratis on this happy night. I have brought a bill, so please you, that will bear some riders on it, and not break its back.

Lady Cy. We'll have no bills nor bickerings any more; and to cut short all reckonings, I'll establish you apothecary-general to the castle, upon a salary fixed.

Sim. Then, Jerry, the less physic you send in, the better for yourself.

Scud. And for all parties, my most honoured lady. I hope most heartily, for all your sakes, my place will be as near a sinecure as possible.

Lady Cy. I hope so too. You and your fair wife are welcome—She is a child of the castle, and will grace our dance.

Scud. Yes, under favour, Jenny, though I say it, has all the steps that now are thought so graceful: She'll balance on one leg, and send the other upon a cruize into her neighbour's pocket: no magnetizing doctor or dotterell-monger can surpass my Jenny for the fine attitudes.

Lady Cy. You're a strange mortal; but let mirth go round, and if the humble annals of our castle can cheer one honest, ease one heavy heart, our harmless efforts have not been in vain. (*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

MYSTERIOUS HUSBAND;

A

TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

BY

RICHARD CUMBERLAND, Esq.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LORD DAVENANT,	*Mr Henderson.*
CHARLES DAVENANT,	*Mr Lewis.*
SIR EDMUND TRAVERS,	*Mr Yates.*
CAPTAIN DORMER,	*Mr Wroughton.*
SIR HARRY HARLOW,	*Mr Aickin.*
PAGET,	*Mr Fearon.*
LADY DAVENANT,	*Miss Young.*
MARIANNE,	*Miss Satchell.*
WAITING-WOMAN,	*Miss Platt.*

LORD DAVENANT'S *Servants, &c.*

TIME——*the Representation.*

SCENE,—London.

THE

MYSTERIOUS HUSBAND.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE

An Apartment in LORD DAVENANT'S *House.*

Enter LORD DAVENANT.

L. Dav. Did ever man mistake his happiness as I have done? Am I by Nature fitted for a husband? Am I by temper qualified to be a gamester? and yet (a plague upon my folly!) I am both: in both I've doubled stakes, and played the losing game: married a wife for money, and a wife for love, and now nor love nor money will get rid of either: upon my right hand and my left a plague: over head ruin impends; under foot lurks discovery—A situation that admits no choice, but choice of miseries. As to my lady Davenant here, if ever man was punished in a fault

less wife, it is my fate to be that man. With beauty to attract, affections to assist temptation, still she stands upon a rock of virtue; nor can I, by the narrowest search, explore a crack or cranny where the slightest levity might enter, to throw down her barriers, and make way for my escape.—When a wife's indiscretion will not save me, well may I rail at Fortune. 'Tis hard to lose upon a cast, where every chance was in my favour.—Now, Paget, before I talk to you, shut the door.

Enter PAGET, *and shuts the door.*

What have you discovered in Lady Davenant since we last conferred?

Paget. Nothing.

L. Dav. No doubt you have watched her?

Paget. Closely.

L. Dav. Where has she been? whom has she seen? what has she done?

Paget. The journal of one day is the journal of her life. If I had the eyes of a hawk, (and mine are none of the dullest,) I could not spy a flaw in Lady Davenant.

L. Dav. Incredible! Are not you an attorney, and is not she a woman? Have not I set you as a spy upon her person; cased the body of a lawyer in the livery of a servant; and, after three months past and more, will you persuade me that you have discovered, what the world never knew—a wife without a flaw? I'll not believe it.

Paget. Why then, my lord, you must even strip my livery off my back, and dismiss me to my parchments.

L. Dav. You will find flaws enough in them. Of this I'm sure—if any thing can outwit a lawyer, it must be the devil; therefore, Paget, I conclude against her ladyship's sanctity. What do you tell me? Has this great city lost its temptations, or reformed

its morals? There are a hundred fine men of the town, who say she is the finest woman in it.

Paget. Yes, and swear it too; but she won't believe 'em.

L. Dav. She was credulous enough when I told her so.

Paget. 'Twas a great weakness; but she is wiser than she was.

L. Dav. Does Sir Harry Harlow make no way? He is a fashionable man, and came on with all the gallantry of a Frenchman.

Paget. Yes, and went off like a Frenchman: he'll not rally any more: we have orders never to admit him—She is in frequent conversation with your son.

L. Dav. I have remarked it, and shall stop their interviews.

Paget. She has been collecting a sum—

L. Dav. What is that for?

Paget. That's more than I can tell. I sold some trinkets for her of her uncle's giving, and exchanged some money into notes this morning.

L. Dav. I paid her quarter's pin-money but yesterday:—This must be look'd into.

Paget. Yes, we may look, but it is seeking for daylight with a dark-lanthorn. Malice cannot spy a fault in her; mischief cannot make one; and if I might offer my advice, it should be to desist from any further pains in the attempt: 'tis merely loss of labour, take my word for it.

L. Dav. To say the truth, I begin to be of your opinion; but till a better plan can be struck out, we must persist in this: You know my reasons, Paget; you alone, of all mankind, are in the secret of that fatal step which trains me on in infamy and error. If Lady Davenant was in fact, as she is in law, my only wife, I would not act as now; but whilst that second marriage in Flanders with Miss Dormer draws

off my heart, and keeps me under terror of discovery, if I can't find occasion for a divorce, I must make it.

Paget. 'Tis plain your passion for Miss Dormer still subsists, else her persuasion of your death, her ignorance of your name and station, and the precautions we have taken to prevent discovery, make these measures needless.

L. Dav. I wish I saw it in that light; but what security have I against Miss Dormer's coming over? what against her marrying again, believing, as she does, that I am dead?—That were a stroke that I should doubly feel. Another danger threatens me:—her brother Dormer may return from sea; his former passion for my lady Davenant, and gratitude for my services in getting him a ship, will expose me to his visits; and I would sooner meet the devil than the man I've wronged so deeply.

Paget. 'Twou'd not be pleasant, I confess; but surely 'twas reported he was killed in action with an enemy's ship in the East Indies.

L. Dav. Wounded, not killed.—But hark! my lady's coming.—Vanish! [*Exit* PAGET. Good morning to you, Lady Davenant;—dressed so early!

Enter LADY DAVENANT.

Lady Dav. 'Tis my uncle's day for visiting, and I made myself ready to receive him.

L. Dav. Come, come, that studied elegance of dress can never be put on to receive an uncle; you had some better object in your eye than old Sir Edmund Travers.

Lady Dav. Perhaps I had.

L. Dav. Why, that's sincere; I know you do not set yourself in such array for family visitors.

Lady Dav. I own it; but a stranger, and a favourite too—when such a one is in the case—

L. Dav. Ay, then you arm at every point for conquest: but this stranger—tell me, who is he?

Lady Dav. Who is a greater stranger than your lordship? If I'm armed for conquest, here's the heart I aim at.

L. Dav. Pshaw! this is trifling; these are words in course. If man and wife keep forms, 'tis all that is required; but to pretend a passion, and talk of love to a husband—'tis an affectation that lowers your understanding, but cannot impose upon mine. In the name of reason, Lady Davenant, make yourself an agreeable wife, but do not sink into that most insipid of all characters, a good sort of woman.

Lady Dav. And what is your description of a good sort of woman?

L. Dav. She is one that keeps the commandments, hears sermons, talks a little innocent scandal, and scolds the servants.

Lady Dav. Now tell me your receipt for an agreeable wife.

L. Dav. An agreeable wife to a man of the world is a woman of the world; one who follows her own pursuits, and does not cross those of her husband. Let me speak to you with sincerity.—We married for convenience. There is a disparity in our ages: I was a widower, with a son as old as yourself; you an orphan girl of fortune, a slave to the humours of your uncle: you purchased liberty by the sacrifice of inclination.

Lady Dav. How does that appear, my lord?

L. Dav. Beyond a doubt. You know your heart was never mine: you know you was in love with Dormer; would have married him; was thwarted in your first affection, and took me upon duty—I might have said upon compulsion; for I was your uncle's choice, not yours.

Lady Dav. Hold there, whilst I declare to you, in truth of heart, if Dormer had not given me up—

unkindly given me up—it was not duty, no, nor yet compulsion, should have forced me to renounce him.

L. Dav. I give you credit for a fair confession, and I draw this natural conclusion from it:—The woman who has loved, will love again.—I am content. Let me speak plainly to you. You are young, handsome, sensible, susceptible: I am declining from the prime of life, a lover of my ease, and, I confess to you, not over uxorious. Why should we restrain each other? Why should marriage, that strikes off other women's fetters, put on yours? Live as women of your rank live: let your life be neither that of a town libertine, nor this, which you now lead, of a matrimonial mope.

Lady Dav. I understand you, my lord; but if I am better pleased to submit to the chagrin of your neglect, than to the reproaches of my own conscience, you will suffer me to pursue a dull choice, and be the object of your contempt, rather than of my own. I'll not disguise from you that my heart is made for love, soft, and subject to temptation; therefore I avoid it: It once belonged to Dormer; he returned it wounded, bleeding, to its owner: 'twas healed, made whole, and offered to Lord Davenant; if you will not receive it, you may send it back to me, as Dormer did; but you shall never make it common property, assure yourself.

L. Dav. Well, let that pass. I have a question, to which I beg your answer, without evasion or reserve.

Lady Dav. Propose it.

L. Dav. What has passed of late between your ladyship and my son? You have been closeted more than once: What have you conferred upon?

Lady Dav. Am I bound to tell that?

L. Dav. Indispensably. I charge you on your duty; if you will put yourself on your defence, defend yourself. I have remarked a sullenness in Cap-

tain Davenant, that does not please me; a darkness and reserve not proper; and I suspect your ladyship of being party in the occasion.

Lady Dav. No, no, if ever I am forced to make my sorrows known, it will not be to your son I shall speak unfavourably of his father.

L. Dav. No matter; tell me what passed.

Lady Dav. Read then, and satisfy your doubts.

[*Gives him a letter.*

L. Dav. (*Reads.*)

"Dear Charles,

"As it may be inconvenient to your father to furnish you with the purchase-money for your majority, accept this trifle in aid, from your ever affectionate

Louisa Davenant."

Confusion!——Let me see—Five hundred pounds! —Your ladyship is very bountiful to Captain Davenant, and very considerate, as you would have it appear, of his father's pocket. If you had studied the necessities of that, madam, why might not your bounty pass through my hands? How know you I approve of this? How can you tell but other calls may be more urgent with me than this of a commission for my son? What if I have duns of honour now at my door? What if I have play-debts, that cannot be put aside? Will you unstring your purse—empty your hoard of pin-money for me?—I do not find you will.

Lady Dav. 'Tis in your hands; dispose of it as you see fit.

L. Dav. And I do see fit to dispose of mine and my son's concerns without your ladyship's advice or interference. I shall also expect, and strictly require, that you do not talk and cabal with my son upon any thing that now passes, ever did pass, or ever shall pass, between you and me upon the subject.

Servant introduces SIR EDMUND TRAVERS.

Serv. Sir Edmund Travers.

Sir Ed. Lord Davenant, I kiss your hands. Why, this is as it should be; this is as it used to be in days of yore, when man and wife fulfilled the saying, and were one flesh. I protest to you, I have been let into the houses of three married couple this morning, and found but one and a half at home.

L. Dav. Perhaps the hen birds were on the perch, Sir Edmund: 'tis rather early.

Sir Ed. Very good, very good; but that was not the case. Lady Turtle, for instance, was on the wing; that dove had left the ark.—Knowing Sir Philander to be so fond a mate, I asked him of my lady—She was not in the house.—How did she do?—He cou'd not tell. —Where was she gone?—He did not care.—I stared at this—He observing my surprise, said, he supposed I had not heard of his misfortune, else I would never have mentioned that vile hussy in his hearing.—A plague upon all family affairs! thought I. 'Twas not a week ago, this fellow held me by the ear with a detail as tedious as the courtship of Jacob and Rebecca. —But I have always said, Lord Davenant and my niece are the only instances of conjugal felicity, in upper life at least.

Lady Dav. If you think us so happy, uncle, why don't you take an agreeable companion to cheer the evening of your days?

Sir Ed. To hang myself in the evening of my days. How cou'd you name so horrible a thing to me as an agreeable companion?

Lady Dav. I've observed that they who rail most against matrimony are the first to marry.

Sir Ed. And I've remarked that they who marry are the first to rail. Lack-a-day, if I did not find you and my lord here together in a family way, as they

call it, always civil and courteous to each other, with a smile of complacency on your countenances, what should I think?—If I did not see these things with my own eyes, what should I say, when so many busy tattling fools are whispering it about that you are the most unhappy couple in London?

L. Dav. Whispering, Sir Edmund! They'll whisper any thing; but who dares say it?

Sir Ed. That was just my answer; my answer to a tittle.—A plague upon you all! said I, t'other night, to a knot of old fogrums at the Mount, who were caballing over their coffee, not perceiving me snug in a corner box—A plague upon you all! said I—

L. Dav. Tedious old blockhead!—I'll escape in time. [*Going.*

Sir Ed. My lord, my lord, hear out my story: it is told in three words.

L. Dav. I beg your pardon, but I've indispensable business, and have outstaid my engagement.

(*Exit* LORD DAVENANT.

Sir Ed. Why, look you there, now—'tis surprising how unwilling people are to hear my stories: not a man in our club will sit them out, except the smokers. 'Twas just the same when I was in parliament—nothing but coughing, hemming, and shuffling of feet: no attention, no desire of information: all their brains a-gadding. And your lord has a piece of that, let me tell you; but a good man in the main, an excellent man in the main, an incomparable husband.

Lady Dav. I make no complaint.

Sir Ed. To be sure you don't.—Complaint, indeed! No, if you had the least cause for that, trust me for finding it out; nothing of that sort could escape me; you know it could not.

Lady Dav. I should be sorry you had any cause to regret a match so entirely of your own making.

Sir Ed. Right, child, you are right; 'twas a match of my own making; you owe all your happiness to your uncle; and you now perceive a grey head was a little wiser than a green one: You was once of another opinion, but that's past and over. I don't reproach you, Louisa; indeed I may charge that error of your life to my own indulgence. I humour'd you to a fault in your education; turn'd my house into a school to make you happy; let you have as many masters as you pleas'd; doctors and apothecaries you might choose amongst them all; but in the important article of a husband, there indeed I stept in; there I had my choice, as was natural I should; and now you see the consequence; now, Louisa, I say, you see the consequence.

Lady Dav. I do, indeed, sir.

Sir Ed. Why, that's fair. You are perfectly happy, and you own it—that's sincere. And what did I do to make you so? Thwarted your inclinations, that were leading you astray. I chose my lord Davenant here, a man of certain age, a widower, d'ye see; not only fit to husband you, Louisa, but to father you; whereas you know, and, if you are honest, you will confess, that if I had indulged you in your choice—

Lady Dav. I should have chosen otherwise.

Sir Ed. You would have married young Dormer.

Lady Dav. I confess it.

Sir Ed. Oh, the many anxious thoughts I had to prevent it! How did I puzzle my poor brain to make you happy, and break off your connection with that young fellow!

Lady Dav. Was there a contrivance in that business?

Sir Ed. Was there a contrivance, child! To be sure there was: There's a contrivance in every thing I do; and I must do Lord Davenant the justice to say, he took some pains in that affair as well as myself—Witness Captain Dormer's letter to you.

Lady Dav. What of that, I beseech you? Let me know all my obligations to Lord Davenant.

Sir Ed. And 'tis fit you should:—Every man's good deeds should be known. He wrote every word of that letter himself; not a syllable was Captain Dormer's.

Lady Dav. Not a syllable!

Sir Ed. Not a tittle—and my lord never told you this?

Lady Dav. Never.

Sir Ed. That's extraordinary; but indeed he bound me to secrecy; so you must say nothing of the matter. Oh! he was at uncommon pains for your sake; for he thought you would be a monstrous fortune; and so to be sure you will at my death—but there I outwitted him too; for I came down with only ten thousand, and saddled him with a humming jointure, and four hundred a-year pin-money.—Ah, my dear Louisa, I consulted your happiness in every tittle of your settlement.

Lady Dav. Since you have been so considerate of me in the bargain you have made with Lord Davenant, let me hope you will now assist him in a family difficulty. His son is treating for the purchase of a majority, and wants a sum of money to complete it; he is an excellent young man, and you would do me a most acceptable kindness, if you would enable me to supply him with five hundred pounds.

Sir Ed. Ah, Louisa, Louisa! I'm afraid the stories I've heard of your husband's gaming are too true.

Lady Dav. About as true as what you've heard of our unhappiness: but I thought you treated all such reports with contempt.

Sir Ed. And so I do.—But time flies: 'tis visiting-day with me, and I must leave you—Good morning.

Lady Dav. But you have given me no answer about the money.

Sir Ed. Answer, child! What signifies answering you, when the thing is impossible? [*Exit.*

LADY DAVENANT, *alone.*

So, then, it seems I have been duped by base contrivances:—Dormer is clear, and I am sacrificed. Lord Davenant's conduct is complete; begins with treachery and ends in tyranny. Most miserable of women! to whom shall I complain?—It is too much: I can't support my agony.

[*Throws herself on a couch, and weeps.*

SIR EDMUND *re-enters.*

Sir Ed. Ay, now she's crying, because I refused her the money: What a fond fool it is! I warrant now she'd pledge her diamonds to redeem her husband.

Lady Dav. Who's there?

Sir Ed. 'Tis I; 'tis uncle Edmund. Nay, Louisa, if you cry, 'tis all over with me—take the money, give me a kiss—I am a foolish, fond old fellow, and cannot bear to see you unhappy. If 'twere as much again, you should have it—but don't ask me for any more; I pray you don't. 'Tis all in notes; they would have been navy bills before night—but I'm foolish, fond old fellow, that's the truth of it.

Lady Dav. I thank you, sir; I thank you.

Sir Ed. A propos, here is the very gentleman you was speaking of. Come in, Captain Davenant; come in without ceremony: My lady has got something for you; but I tell no tales; I betray no secrets—so—so I leave you together. Good bye to you. I leave you together. [*Exit.*

Enter CAPTAIN DAVENANT.

Capt. Dav. What is this secret that Sir Edmund has broached? What commands has your ladyship for me?

Lady Dav. After what my uncle has said, 'tis in vain to deny that I have a request to make, which I beg you not to refuse me.

Capt. Dav. If the request shall be, as I suspect it is, to receive fresh favours from you, 'tis the only difficulty you can put me to in obeying you.

Lady Dav. If you knew what pleasure I receive by tendering to you this trifle towards the purchase of your rank, you would take it for my sake, without further scruple: If you have any regard for me, accept it at my hands.

Capt. Dav. What shall I say to you, most generous of women?

Lady Dav. Nothing; neither is it convenient we should converse together. I am obliged to request of you not to mention what has pass'd.

Capt. Dav. O, Lady Davenant! Lady Davenant! my heart bleeds for you.

Lady Dav. Hush! not a word of that.—Now, sir—

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir Harry Harlow, to wait upon your ladyship.

Lady Dav. Did not I tell you to deny me? I am not at home to Sir Harry Harlow. [*Exit.*

Serv. What wou'd your honour please to have me do? He is coming up stairs.

Capt. Dav. Rascal, be gone! [*Exit Servant.*

Enter SIR HARRY HARLOW.

Sir Har. How now, Charles! Rating the footman? It is indeed an untowardly whelp: her ladyship is not very select in the choice of her lacqueys: he wou'd have persuaded me I was not to be let in —But won't your fair mother-in-law make her appearance?

Capt. Dav. No.

Sir Har. No, man! Is that all the answer you can afford me? The yard-dog wou'd say as much.

Capt. Dav. Take your answer from him then, when you make your next inquiries.

Enter LORD DAVENANT.

L. Dav. How now, gentlemen both, at sharps with each other?

Sir Har. Captain Davenant seems to guard your lordship's doors, as if it was a crime to enter them; if so, I must confess it is a crime I am not disposed to repent of, at least till you tell me I ought to do so. (CAPT. DAVENANT *walks aside.*

L. Dav. Pooh! 'tis his manner; 'tis the fashion of the times: the young men now-a-days, and the young women too, talk no other language to their dearest friends.—Hark ye, Charles, have the kindness to step into the library: I want a few words in private with you. (*Exit* CAPT. DAVENANT.) This young man has ruffled you; and, to say truth, his manners are much alter'd: whether he mistakes in thinking a fierce military air becomes him, or that some secret matter really disconcerts him, I can't pretend to say, for he communicates with me but little. I beg you will think no more of what is past, for my sake.

Sir Har. Assure yourself, my lord, 'tis as if it had never been.

L. Dav. Here, Harry, I have a play-debt to settle with you; take these notes.

Sir Har. As you will for that; chuse your own time.

L. Dav. Nay, but take them—'twas a cursed crash I got last night. (*Gives him the notes.*

Sir Har. Deuce take me, my lord, if it does not go to my heart to win your money: I have a thousand times resolv'd never to play with you again.

L. Dav. Why so, in the name of wonder?

Sir Har. Because I cannot bear to wear in my pocket what might so much better be employ'd elsewhere.

L. Dav. What is the man moralizing about?

Sir Har. Well, I protest and vow, was I the husband of my lady Davenant—

L. Dav. You would be as tir'd of her as I am.

Sir Har. For shame, for shame! What woman can be more engaging?

L. Dav. Every woman that is not my wife.

Sir Har. That ever matrimony shou'd bring a man to this!—As Heaven shall be my judge, I'd give one half of my estate to share the other with the woman you are so indifferent about.

L. Dav. And I wou'd give this arm from off this body to be quit of her; so there's the difference between you and me: But let us talk no more of the subject—Is your chariot in waiting?

Sir Har. It is.

L. Dav. Are you going to any distance?

Sir Har. Only to a visit in the next street, and then home.

L. Dav. If that's all, I should be glad you wou'd take my chair, and lend me your carriage: I have a little business at t'other end of the town.

Sir Har. Take it where you please; 'tis at your service. I perceive I shall not have the honour of making my bow to Lady Davenant this morning.

L. Dav. To say the truth, I suspect you will not: it does not appear to me, Harry, that you are in train to make your way to her ladyship's good graces—and it requires a very moderate share of resolution to resist temptation, when there is no inclination for the tempter. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in LORD DAVENANT'S *House.*

LADY DAVENANT, *followed by* CAPT. DAVENANT.

Capt. Dav. I must speak to you; you must give me a few minutes hearing.

Lady Dav. Promise, then, you will not name your father.

Capt. Dav. 'Tis upon another business quite; and because you are the friend I best love on earth, you shall be the first to whom I communicate my joy.

Lady Dav. You have obtained your commission?

Capt. Dav. I have indeed; but not the commission, my dear lady, you are thinking of; not a promotion to rank, but to happiness—I am married.

Lady Dav. Heaven and earth!—to whom?

Capt. Dav. An angel: one who, in mind and person, is your sister, and, if evil fate had not forbade, might have been such in fact.

Lady Dav. What do you mean? Explain yourself.

Capt. Dav. The sister of your Dormer.

Lady Dav. My Dormer! What is it you tell me? —Does your father know of this?

Capt. Dav. It is not fit he should: how could he be reconciled to my choice, when he neglects his own?

Lady Dav. Remember your promise, and no more of this.—Where did you meet Miss Dormer? I thought she was resident in Flanders.

Capt. Dav. 'Twas there I met her, on my late journey to Spa.—How I became acquainted with her, why I conceal'd from you my passion, with each circumstance of her affecting story, will demand relation more at large—But she is not, as you call her, Miss Dormer.

Lady Dav. That I can readily conceive, since you have married her.

Capt. Dav. But she was not Miss Dormer when I did marry her: she was the widow of an English gentleman, of the name of Brooke, who liv'd with her about three months; went to Paris, and there died.—There is something mysterious in the conduct of this man; but that, with other matters, I must now defer. We are just return'd from a church in the city; but as friendship has its claim upon my heart as well as love, I snatch an hour from my enchanting bride to seek her counterpart; and as I fear you have few blessings you can call your own, I beg you to accept a share in mine.—Farewell!

Lady Dav. May happiness attend you both!—(*Exit* CAPT. DAVENANT.) Married to Dormer's sister! How that name strikes on my heart!—And I the confidante of a clandestine marriage:—A dangerous secret for my peace; the transport of the moment never suffered him to think of that.—Well, let the danger come! There was a time I shou'd have been more scrupulous; but the base conduct of Lord Davenant makes him loathsome in my eyes; and was my injur'd hero now to come—Oh, Heaven, I will not think of it.—Watch over him, ye guardians of the good and brave!—waft him, ye winds, to glory!—may the ship that bears him, and the star by which he sails, be ever prosperous!—and, as he walks the deck by night, amidst the

waste of waters, should a thought of my unkindness smite his manly heart with sadness, may some pitying spirit turn aside the thought, and strike out my unhappy name from his remembrance!

Enter Servant.

Serv. Please your ladyship, there is a sea-officer below, inquires for my lord: I told him he was from home, but he says he will wait his return.

Lady Dav. Where is my lord?

Serv. Gone out in Sir Harry Harlow's chariot. I hope his lordship will not be angry at my letting the gentleman in.

Lady Dav. I hope not: You should make him give his name, however.

Serv. That I did at first, madam; 'tis our general order.

Lady Dav. And what is his name?

Serv. He has wrote it down on a card.—Bless me, my lady! something's the matter. Shall I run for your ladyship's woman?

Lady Dav. No, no; be quiet—it will go off—What have I done with the card?

Serv. Here it is.—Pray, my lady, forgive my boldness, and let me call your servant.

Lady Dav. There's no occasion—I charge you not to mention to a soul that I was ill.—Shew the gentleman into the eating-parlour—and remember to tell nobody of this trifling disorder.

Serv. Not for the world.—The blessing on her! What a sweet lady it is! [*Exit.*

LADY DAVENANT, *alone.*

Lady Dav. Dormer return'd, and in the house!—All-ruling Providence, receive a helpless creature into thy protection! Succour my fainting spirits in this dangerous moment, and support my resolution, struggling in a tide of passions, from whose over-

whelming force no hand but thine can save me!—I obey—It is thy voice that warns me to avoid him; and though to justify myself to Dormer were the dearest object of my life, I will not do it: No, let me suffer as I may, I will not meet him; I will never see him more.

Enter Waiting-Woman.

W. Wom. O madam! O my lady! such a thing is come to pass! Captain Dormer's in the house: I have seen him with my own eyes.

Lady Dav. Well, if he is, what's that to me? Was it well done of you, to expose me by your idle curiosity?

W. Wom. Indeed and indeed, my lady, I was innocently going into the eating-parlour for your ladyship's netting-box, not thinking any body was there, when I saw a sea-officer in his uniform, looking earnestly at your ladyship's portrait over the chimney: his back was towards me, so I did not know who it was; and on I went, thinking no offence, when suddenly he turn'd upon me; and then, to be sure, I gave a loud shriek, discovering him to be Captain Dormer.

Lady Dav. Does he know I am in this house?

W. Wom. Know, madam! To be sure he knows your ladyship is married to my lord; for he ask'd me if the portrait was not drawn for you, which you know I cou'd not deny—and then he ask'd me how it came in this house; and so I told him you was married to my lord; which is nothing but the truth—and then, mercy on me, how he started! So I thought I wou'd say no more: But as I was going, madam, he took me by the hand, and held me, and then he ask'd me half a hundred questions, all in a breath, so that I knew not what to answer; but telling him that your ladyship wanted me up stairs,

away I run—and if I have done any thing amiss, I heartily ask your ladyship's pardon.

Lady Dav. Amiss! I know not what you have done.—Did he ask to see me?

W. Wom. Oh! most earnestly; but I was afraid to tell your ladyship of that: Indeed he begg'd very hard to see you.

Lady Dav. Impossible! It must not be.—How does he look?

W. Wom. Lovelily; you wou'd be charm'd to see him.

Lady Dav. Pooh!—I mean, is he in health?

W. Wom. In perfect health.

Lady Dav. Thank Heaven for that!

W. Wom. Madam?

Lady Dav. Restrain your curiosity, if you please, and say nothing of what has pass'd. Go down to Captain Dormer, and tell him—tell him I'm rejoic'd—No, that won't do—Cruel necessity!—Tell him I must never see him more.

W. Wom. Lack-a-day, my lady, I shall never have the heart to tell him that.—Oh, the mischief! here's my lord. [*Exit hastily.*

Enter LORD DAVENANT.

L. Dav. So your Captain Dormer is come home, and you have admitted him into my house.

Lady Dav. No, my lord, I have not admitted him.

L. Dav. But your ambassadress there has been in treaty—messages have passed; I know they have.

Lady Dav. My conduct, my lord, is open: I have no secrets; and if it is any satisfaction to you to know it, I can assure you it is my fixed resolution never to see Captain Dormer any more.

L. Dav. A woman's resolution; and you will keep it accordingly.

Lady Dav. I hope I shall keep it, for your lordship's sake as well as my own.

L. Dav. For my sake!

Lady Dav. Yes, I have the strongest reasons on your account. Captain Dormer is an injured man: interviews might draw on explanations, and these might lead to consequences of an unpleasant nature.

L. Dav. You deal in riddles, madam; your tone is raised too, now your champion's in the house.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Captain Dormer's compliments, and begs to know if your lordship will be pleas'd to see him.

L. Dav. Tell him I'll wait upon him presently.—(*Exit Servant.*) What can she mean by explanations?—Her confidence alarms me.—If Paget has betray'd me—if she has heard of my affair with Dormer's sister, all is lost.—I'll prove her further.—(*Aside.*) You say that Dormer is an injur'd man—Who tells you so? What is his injury, and who has done it?

Lady Dav. If letters have been fabricated which he never wrote, and if it may be call'd an injury to impress with false opinions hearts that were once devoted to each other, then am I warranted in what I say.—My uncle is my author.

L. Dav. So your wise uncle has told you this—this is the mighty mystery.—For my share of the artifice, it is amongst the crimes I have repented of most cordially: You cannot execrate the luckless hour that made us one more bitterly than I do.

Lady Dav. Since it is so, my lord, I shall not aggravate that bitterness by exposing you to the reproaches of Captain Dormer.

L. Dav. If you've no other reason for avoiding him but this, you are free to justify yourself at my expence—if you have nothing else to charge me with to Captain Dormer, this I can face, and in-

stantly.—Who waits?—Nay, I'll prevent you, own to what I've done, and stand by consequences, be they what they may.—Stay, you yourself shall hear me.

Lady Dav. I beg to be excused: I must insist upon permission to withdraw. [*Exit.*

Enter Servant.

L. Dav. Tell Captain Dormer I am ready to receive him—for if the time must come when he that does the wrong, and he that suffers it, shall face to face bring their accounts to issue, better that the audit pass in this life than another—Why then this sudden tremor?—Conscience, conscience, is this fair dealing? Slow to admonish, when you might have saved me; loud in reproach, when admonition is too late. What if I told this young man all the wrong I've done him?—What if I avow'd the horrid injury that's yet unknown; that worm that gnaws my heart; that canker, which the incision of his sword can only cure?—I know the awful consummation is at hand: I feel the coming on of things; but when, and in what manner they shall pass, I cannot tell. The hand that rules my fate must fashion it.

Servant introduces CAPTAIN DORMER.

Serv. Captain Dormer. [*Exit.*

L. Dav. You are welcome to England, sir. I am sorry I was not ready to receive you, and that you have been put to the trouble of waiting for me.

Dorm. The apology is due for my importunity; but I consider this as a visit of duty; and as I owe my command to your lordship's recommendation, I was determined that the first door I entered in London should be yours.

L. Dav. You are just arrived?

Dorm. Within this hour.

L. Dav. You do me honour, and I hear with

much content you've done yourself great honour, and the service.

Dorm. Such men and officers as I have served with must insure success: I must have been the sole defaulter in my ship, if we had flinch'd our duty.

L. Dav. If there is any thing I can further obey you in, you will be pleased to command me.

Dorm. I humbly thank you, and can only say, though I have been long at sea, I don't wish to be idle on shore. There is a business, however, that I have at heart to settle before I go out again; and as your lordship's favour has enabled me to make a fortune, the same friendship, perhaps, will assist me in the disposal of it.

L. Dav. Explain yourself, if you please:—You know I have always been at your service.

Dorm. I have a sister—

L. Dav. Sir!—(*Starting.*)

Dorm. My lord! I hope you have heard nothing to the contrary.

L. Dav. No, on my honour.—Please to proceed.

Dorm. I hope she is yet living: 'tis a long time since I heard from her: she is the only relation I have left: an orphan girl, my lord; and if she is still at Antwerp, where I left her, I can scarce hope to see her before I am order'd out again. To her I have bequeath'd the earnings of my service, and in the mean time made suitable provision for her support:—If you, who are the founder of my fortune, will kindly undertake this friendly trust, and suffer me to deposite in your care an orphan charge, you will put me under everlasting obligation.

L. Dav. By Heaven, this is too much! (*Aside.*) Sir!—Mr Dormer!—I am sensible of the honour you do me—but you must think I am a man not used to business of this sort—The commission is a

very delicate commission:—the charge of a young lady—

Dorm. Is a very sacred charge—I feel it such, and therefore ardently would wish to rest it with a man of honour. I am sensible of my presumption; I know I am imposing trouble, where I ought only to be paying gratitude—but, my lord Davenant, I have no friends except in my own profession: they cannot serve me on this occasion. You are my only hope; and as you have once taken me by the hand, I pray you do not let it go. I am bold to hope I shall not bring discredit on your protection, and I shall be through life devoted to you for the favour.

L. Dav. I am distressed; and if I do not answer you to your wish, it is because I'm sensible I do not merit the good opinion you repose in me.—You will allow me some time to reflect on what you desire.

Dorm. By all means: I would not take your friendship by surprise. One thing I should naturally have stated to you before, but since I entered your lordship's house, I have been informed of a circumstance that makes the mention of it a matter of some embarrassment.

L. Dav. What may that circumstance be?

Dorm. I understand you have the happiness to call a lady yours, whom I had once the audacity to aspire to—Miss Travers, I am told, is Lady Davenant.

L. Dav. How is she interested in this business?

Dorm. Your lordship having been privy to my passion for your most amiable lady, I may be allowed to say to you, that it was my first passion, and will be my last. Her uncle's opposition and her better destiny traversed my too ambitious hopes, and reserved her to a worthier choice. Though there was something harder than I could have expected in her manner of dismissing me, still, upon reflection, I cannot condemn the lady, who had

prudence to reject an insolent pretender with the scorn he merited: nay, I am vain enough to flatter myself, her uncle dictated expressions that did not originate with her.—Be that as it may, I have bequeathed my fortune to her, upon failure of my sister and her heirs.

L. Dav. Astonishing! When did you take this resolution?

Dorm. When I was far enough from thinking I should ever see her more:—after the action, when I was despaired of from my wounds: and though I do not wish your lordship to report this to Lady Davenant, I hope it will be a motive with you for undertaking the trust, when so dear a part of you has an eventful interest in it.

L. Dav. So dear a part of me! 'Tis plain that she is such to you, and that her refusal has not yet extinguished your affection.

Dorm. No, my lord, her honour and her happiness are still as dear to me as my own; no other object can ever interpose to draw off my attachment: Having once had the honour of being regarded by her, I can never descend to think of any other woman; and I hope I have already convinced your lordship, that, so far from bearing enmity to the happy man who possesses her, I rejoice to find that the object of her love and the friend of my life is one and the same person. I therefore once again entreat you to take my sister also into your protection, and you will then have in charge every thing I hold valuable upon earth.

L. Dav. This is really so extraordinary, that I must wonder on what grounds you rest a confidence in me so full and so implicit.

Dorm. To say the truth, I follow Lady Davenant's choice; persuaded I may trust my interests where she reposes hers.

L. Dav. But suppose, for a moment, that com-

pulsion, and not choice, determined Lady Davenant to ally herself to me?

Dorm. Impossible! I'll not suppose it for a moment.

L. Dav. Nay, let me put a stronger case.—Suppose this idol of your soul should raise no ecstacies in mine—What if this angel of perfection should to me appear the most indifferent of women?—In plainer words, what would you say if Lady Davenant was the object of my fix'd aversion?

Dorm. What would I say!—But I forbear, and understand such suppositions as a civil intimation that 'tis time I took my leave.

L. Dav. Oh, by no means: I've much to say to you.

Dorm. Some other time: I've troubled you too long already. [*Exit hastily.*

LORD DAVENANT, *alone.*

L. Dav. Cursed be the hour in which I wrong'd this man! What a clear spirit! What a lofty soul! There is a stateliness and grace in virtue, which guilty pride can never imitate.—'Sdeath! how I loath myself! Damnation! what a wretch I am! If I had worlds, I'd give them to be free.—Vain lamentation! vain remorse!—Let no man think to take one step in infamy, and then retract:—Impossible! The precipice has no degrees—down, down he falls at once, plunges into the fathomless abyss, and sinks for ever! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Changes to the Apartment of MARIANNE.

MARIANNE *enters hastily.*

Mar. Where shall I hide myself? He's in the house.—What shall I say?—How shall I bear to see him?—Wretched, wretched woman! (*Weeps.*

Enter CHARLES *to her.*

Capt. Dav. Joy to my Marianne! my wife! my —Heaven defend me! What's the matter? Why are you in tears? My life! my soul! what ails thee?—Answer me, or I shall sink with apprehension.

Mar. Alas, my dearest friend, no more my husband—

Capt. Dav. What do you mean? I am in agonies.

Mar. My husband is alive; I have seen him.

Capt. Dav. What then am I?

Mar. Ruin'd, disgrac'd, betray'd—and I the cause.

Capt. Dav. Oh, insupportable and killing stroke! Can there be misery more deep than this? By Heaven, I'll not resign you. Villain, deceiver as he is, he cannot claim what he has faithlessly abandon'd; and if he does, my sword shall strike him dead. Blast him, eternal justice!—Burst underneath his feet, and swallow him, thou violated earth!

Mar. By this our last embrace, I do beseech you moderate your rage: it frightens me; your looks are wild—have patience, and collect yourself to bear this cruel stroke.

Capt. Dav. If what extinguishes my happiness deprives me of my reason, can I help it? If you have seen him, known him, and conversed with him, direct me where he is, and I'll assert my right; for if he was my father, by the Power that made me—

Mar. Pray, no more: Hear me, if possible, with some composure.

Capt. Dav. Where did this meeting pass? You have not left the house.

Mar. I saw him from my window in his chariot: There was a noise and uproar in the street; some fray between his servants and the driver of a hackney carriage:—He had let down the glass, and stopt his chariot.

Capt. Dav. But are you sure 'twas he?

Mar. Too sure. No sooner did my eye glance on his person than, terror-struck, and scarce myself, I ran down to the door, went out, and call'd to him to stop, for now the carriages were disengaged.

Capt. Dav. What did he then?

Mar. He stopt, look'd out, discover'd me, and calling eagerly to his coachman, drove furiously away.

Capt. Dav. Infamous wretch! abuser of your unprotected innocence! hypocrite, that, counterfeiting piety, stole into the sanctuary of virtue, and robb'd the altar of its holiest relique!——I never liked his story; always thought his sanctified approaches, under cloak of mock benevolence and pity, were suspicious: then his pretended death, and the inscrutable darkness succeeding it, were proofs demonstrative of fraud. My life upon't, he is some titled profligate. Have you no marks to trace him by? The equipage, arms, liveries? did you not note them? —Through the earth I will pursue him to detection.

Mar. I was incapable of such remarks. I have sent my servant amongst the neighbours. His equipage

was gay and splendid, and 'tis possible it may be known.—But what ensues when it is known?—Distraction, death.—Oh, leave me, Charles, renounce me, banish my misfortunes from your thoughts, and may some happier woman— .

Capt. Dav. Madness is in the thought: Never will I forsake thee; never, by all that's sacred, whilst I live, will I acknowledge any other wife: in thy embrace is centered all my happiness—Here, here, my lovely Marianne, I will both live and die.

Mar. Alas, my dearest Charles, although my soul doats on you, can I for your sake suffer it?—ought I, for my own?

Capt. Dav. Are you not then my wife? Who shall oppose it? Have you any other husband? Let the world's laws interpret as they may, by right of Heaven's decree you are mine. Let him that forg'd the lie fall by the lie. What if the records of his death were false?—You thought them true, and in persuasion of their truth, you married; therefore he's dead to you, though he survives to villainy—the husband is extinct, though the impostor lives.

Mar. For me, who am the child of sorrow, friendless and obscure, the world's opinions are no rule of right—Heaven and my conscience give the law to me—But oh! to sink your fame and fortune, bury all your splendid hopes, your active talents—it is not to be thought of: No, your friends, your family, your country claims you. Misfortune is my birthright; I am encompassed with a sphere of wretchedness, and every one is blighted that approaches me. An orphan in the cradle, one brave youth, one dear beloved brother, was the cordial of my life—of him perhaps I am bereft.

Capt. Dav. No, Providence restores him to you: This sad accident so filled my thoughts, or I had sooner told you the good tidings of your brother.—Dormer's arrived.

Mar. Is he arriv'd?

Capt. Dav. He is arrived, and crown'd with glory, crown'd with fortune. You are the sister of a hero, who will stand recorded in his country's brightest annals. Interest might solicit your alliance; pride might boast of it; even misers now might court the sister of the wealthy Dormer.

Mar. Then I will not despair. Amidst the clouds and darkness of my fate, Heaven yet shall visit me with one bright gleam of hope.

Capt. Dav. Yes, we shall still be happy. I feel my spirits lighten. My love to you is not a brutal heat; 'tis founded on the graces of your mind, brightened, but not blinded, by the charms of your person. I have no part to act. To Dormer, to my father, to the world, I will avow my claim. I'll seek your brother, join him in dragging forth to light this dark, Mysterious Husband. To this I pledge my word; till this be done, however painful the suspense, however dear the sacrifice, I am your friend, not husband.—Come, come then, thou soft affliction, quiet thy distracted thoughts;—all things will yet be well. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

Enter LORD DAVENANT *and* PAGET.

L. Dav. I tell you 'tis impossible. I am beset, embay'd; broad, full-faced infamy now stares upon

me. If all the demons that are leagued in mischief sat in council for my rescue, Hell and its advocates have no resource to ward off my detection.

Paget. I would have had you thought of this before.

L. Dav. Pr'ythee forbear reproach: My own heart is sufficient for that office.—Where is my lady?

Paget. In her chamber.

L. Dav. Alone?

Paget. I think so.

L. Dav. Would she were in her grave!—I'll think of that.—The sight of Marianne, the glimpse I snatched this morning of her beauties, fatal although it be, has stirr'd the flame afresh: it burns within me; horror cannot quench it—Dormer's return, his presence, his reproaches can't extinguish it; not even his sword, though it transfix'd my heart.—But I forget to ask you what intelligence you've gathered. Am I discovered? Is my name out in the affair?

Paget. I do not find it is; and if you wish it should not, you must take instant measures with Sir Harry Harlow and his servants: his equipage is known by many, and will lead discovery to you.

L. Dav. To him, you mean—and that's to me. Can I set him in front, and skulk behind his friendship, like a coward? Will he permit it, think you? No.—Can I?—There's no evasion left.—Now, what's your business?

Enter Servant.

Serv. My lord, Sir Edmund Travers is below.

L. Dav. Admit him.—Doating blockhead! blind fool! that cannot see the sun at noon; for that is not more glaring in its full meridian, than the apparent misery that he is author of.—Be gone.

[*Exit* PAGET.

43264

Enter SIR EDMUND TRAVERS.

Sir Ed. My lord, I've news for you.

L. Dav. Dormer's arrived.

Sir Ed. How your wit jumps!

L. Dav. I've news for you—A secret; but you'll keep it?

Sir Ed. Oh! upon honour.

L. Dav. Nay, as you will, for this it is—We are two sorry knaves.

Sir Ed. Who? You and I?

L. Dav. Exactly so:—a pair as perfect as iniquity e'er match'd. We trick'd this marriage neatly; did we not?—Fine cheats, to pass these letters off upon your niece and Dormer.—Neat forgeries they were, and precious gulls the lovers, to be trapp'd so readily. But you are secret now; true to the gang?—You did not blab this to Lady Davenant?

Sir Ed. What do you mean? I blab it! I to Lady Davenant!

L. Dav. You. If you dare, deny it.

Sir Ed. Deny it! No, I cannot absolutely deny it; but who could think she would be fool enough to broach it?

L. Dav. The first that broached it was the fool. You've set the mischief running, now drain the bitter cup of your affliction to its lowest and its foulest dregs. Dormer shall know the plot, which hand in hand we've practised to deceive him. The passion which was dead in him shall rise again. I'll urge them on, inflame them to renew'd desires, and when their stimulated hearts rush to forbidden transports, then, in that guilty moment, you and I, like brother villains, will steal in with silent steps, and feast upon the ruin we have made.

Sir Ed. Oh, horrible! You'll not do this.

L. Dav. Why not? such true bred sons of wickedness as we are have a luxury in mischief. What

do you care? You hate your niece; I execrate my wife.

Sir Ed. Why, you are mad, sure; stark mad, and raving. I hate my niece! You execrate your wife! I thought you were the fondest pair on earth; and for my niece—

L. Dav. You stole her from an honest man, and sold her to a lord. Now get you home: weigh these things well in your discerning mind: put truth in one scale, titles in the other; and when you've struck the balance, come and compare accounts with me, and we'll divide the gains. [*Exit.*

SIR EDMUND TRAVERS, *alone.*

Sir Ed. 'Tis as I said: The man's beside himself; out of all line and compass of right reason: I saw it in his eyes: The moon's in the mad quarter. 'Tis jealousy of Dormer—sheer, downright jealousy, and nothing else: Foregad! and that will do't as soon as any thing. He said he'd tell the plot to Dormer, make them both desperately in love afresh, and put them together; a proof of jealousy:—He said he execrated his wife; a proof he loves her: And what are love and jealousy but madness? How his poor brains are tumbled topsy-turvy! I pity him at my heart. I must look sharp, and watch this Dormer closely: if I discover them at their old tricks, I shall make bold to read this niece of mine a good round lecture. When so many heads are gone astray, 'tis lucky for the world that some folks have their wits about them. [*Exit.*

LORD DAVENANT *returns.*

L. Dav. I will not live in torment; nor shall the preaching of pedantic churchmen fetter this free spirit in this body, when it is weary of its prison. What know they of an hereafter more than we, who never proved it? All is speculation in futurity; and he that

travels on in misery, in the hope or fear of what shall meet him at his journey's end, gives up his reason for a dream, and follows a blind guide, he knows not whither, and he knows not why.

Enter LADY DAVENANT.

Lady Dav. I interrupt your meditations.

L. Dav. You shall partake of them.—Come, I shall probe your spirit; I shall bring you to confession ere we part. Is it not a miserable life we have passed together? Is it not a cursed one?

Lady Dav. It might have been more happy.

L. Dav. How? What can make harmony of discord? How can two hearts be brought together, that so widely point asunder? Will the weak bands of marriage draw them nearer? No. We were made by Heaven so adverse and unlike in our original construction, that we may safely set the rubric at defiance, and, without more process, part.

Lady Dav. Part!

L. Dav. For ever.

Lady Dav. On what plea?

L. Dav. The best and fairest—mutual aversion.

Lady Dav. Of what can you accuse me?

L. Dav. Of hypocrisy, if you persist to live with me. Who harbours with the thing he hates? What creature mates with its opposite? Nature protests against it. You hate me: Come, I know you do, and you have cause.

Lady Dav. Remove that cause; break off from those bad courses that degrade a mind not naturally degenerate: 'twill be a worthier separation, a more laudable divorce, than from an unoffending wife.

L. Dav. What if I did? You cannot love me.

Lady Dav. Try: there is virtue in the experiment at least.

L. Dav. You love young Dormer; in your soul you love him: what your foolish uncle has betrayed

endears him to you more than ever: what I tell you will augment that augmentatio flame affection into phrenzy.

Lady Dav. Stop then in time. By every name, I charge you to forbear. Let me be misc but do not make me guilty.

L. Dav. I mean to save you both from misery an guilt.—I have convers'd with Dormer: he adores you—defeated in his hopes, dismissed, and by our artifices used most hardly, still he persists to love you:—nay, the deluded, generous youth, because I am your husband, even on me devolves his friendship and affection—tenders to me the execution of his will—solicits me (oh, wondrous test of confidence!) to take the guardianship of Marianne.

Lady Dav. Astonishing!

L. Dav. Yes, 'twere astonishing, if you knew all. (*Aside.*) Nay, there is more—He has bequeathed you his whole fortune at his sister's death. Now, what think you of this man? Now, Lady Davenant, how do you feel your heart affected by these proofs of unabating love?

Lady Dav. Deeply, most deeply—yet not otherwise, I hope, than as becomes your wife.

L. Dav. Hence with the name! Hence with that idle ceremony, to which our hearts were never pledged; which nature cancels, reason disavows, and we both execrate religiously!—Go where your heart invites you: go to Dormer; with him you will be blest: with me each day, each hour will aggravate your wretchedness.

Lady Dav. Can you be serious?

L. Dav. As death. The bitter moments you have passed are sweet to those that must inevitably follow.

Lady Dav. My lord, my lord, you put too much upon me, when you urge me to a deed of such disgrace. Your cruelty will shortly bring me to my

n you'll be free; but if the process be too
r impatience, draw forth your sword; I'll
et its point, than be the guilty thing that
ld make me.

Dav. Curst be these peevish scruples! By the
er that made me, if you will not accord to my
oposal, I will render life your torment—and for that bubble reputation, which you prize so much above its worth, I'll blast it through the world. I'll fasten shame upon you—it shall haunt you like your shadow: ridicule shall dog you at the heels; abuse and slander bark at you like hounds, and tear that virtue which is but a cloak to nakedness and rags; and when I've rendered you thus loathsome to behold, I'll take you at your word—bury my sword in your relentless breast, and after plunge it in my own.

Lady Dav. Alas, my lord, I pity you, and feel more terror for your desperation than my own danger. There must be something horrid in your mind; more than you have yet disclosed.

L. Dav. Perhaps there is; and 'tis in pity that I call upon you now thus earnestly—thus, for the last time, to save yourself. 'Tis not by nature I am cruel:—one dishonourable deed, the impulse of a guilty passion, has distorted all my actions. I would confide it to you, for I hold you worthy every sacred trust, but——

PAGET *enters.*

Hah! he is come! Bid Captain Dormer enter.

Lady Dav. Dormer again! Then let me go.

L. Dav. No, you must stay: by all that's sacred, you shall not depart.

Lady Dav. Support me, Heaven, and witness for me that I did not seek this interview.—'Tis he.

Enter DORMER; *seeing* LADY DAVENANT, *he starts.*

L. Dav. Stand not amazed, but enter: She whom

you see is here—the faded form, that once you thought so fair, is present.—Approach.

Dorm. Yes, if my limbs will bear me.—Oh! to each sense most dear!—Thou best of women!

(*Advances to her.*

L. Dav. Add, too, unhappiest.

Lady Dav. Save me; support me, or I faint.

(DORMER *supports her in his arms.*

Dorm. Help, help, my lord! She faints.

L. Dav. Alas! my touch will murder: be it your task: your right is preferable; for you she loved, me she only married.

Dorm. Can you look on unmoved?

L. Dav. How should you know what moves and passes here? I am the author of this interview—it is the tribute of atonement. I am the man who counterfeited that letter that dismissed you from your hopes: the ship my interest procured for you, my jealousy provided.—Now, if you wish destruction to your sister, give her in charge to me.

Dorm. To infamy as soon. Return, and meet your death. (LORD DAVENANT *is going.*

L. Dav. Before you take my life, recover hers: when you've done that, I shall be found: mean time I leave with you my pledge. [*Exit.*

Lady Dav. (*Recovering.*) What's that? Where am I? Ah! (*Looking on* DORMER, *shrieks.*) O, Dormer, Dormer!

Dorm. Speak to me: unload your burden'd heart: be candid to a friend, whose very soul is yours.

Lady Dav. I had determined never to have seen you more.

Dorm. O exemplary woman! Even that I could have borne, had you been happy:—But that monster shall not live.

Lady Dav. Hold, hold! You must not draw your sword upon Lord Davenant.

Dorm. Not draw my sword! My wrongs and you

redress will sanctify revenge: 'Twere criminal to let him live.

Lady Dav. What! shall I be a party in the assassination of my husband?—I tell you, Dormer, if you ever draw your sword upon him, from that moment I renounce you; never will I see you, speak of you, or in meditation call you to remembrance, but with horror.

Dorm. Not when he dares me to it?

Lady Dav. Never in any case, by any call or provocation, if you have love or pity for me left.

Dorm. If I have love! Oh, if the awful presence of your virtue did not check my tongue, I should have told you at your feet my uncontrouled affection. If I have love, Louisa! Notwithstanding your supposed unkindness, 'spite of all the artifices practised to estrange you from me, my unaltered heart has still been yours: to the world's utmost limits I have carried your beloved image, the companion of each day, and the vision of each night: to the very gates of death it has attended me: it has cheered me in sickness, covered me in battle, and been the guiding star by which I shaped my course.

Lady Dav. O, Dormer, was it light affliction to a heart like mine to be deprived of all it held most dear? In the moment of my disappointment, when you, as I believed, renounced me, and departed without explanation; in that agony and conflict of my mind did they assail me, urge, compel me to a marriage with Lord Davenant. Why should I accuse him of unkindness? What could such a match produce but misery?—The efforts that I made to please him, though they cost me dear, could not impose on his sagacity—the laboured tasks of duty poorly counterfeit the genuine glow of love.

Dorm. Now, then, Louisa, since your tyrant must escape unpunished, what do you resolve on? When

he has left you to the world, where will you seek a shelter?

Lady Dav. Where can I shelter, but in my former asylum?

Dorm. Go to the wretch that sacrificed you! No. What is this rigid arbiter, propriety, by whose decrees you are thus blindly govern'd?—What is this worldly idol, to whose bloody altars we must offer up our lives?

Lady Dav. What would you have me do? Where would you have a wretched wife resort?

Dorm. Is there no friend, whose faithful heart is yours?—What have I done, that I must be a second time excluded? I have a sister: may not she receive you?—My fortune now is ample.—Oh, reflect upon my sufferings: give me what honour can bestow—I ask no more.

Lady Dav. What shall I say?

Dorm. Do you still love me?

Lady Dav. O, Dormer, do not press me.

Dorm. Nay, but resolve me—leave me not in doubt—my life is on your lips: silence will be my doom: I die, if you forbid it not.

Lady Dav. Heaven and its blessed angels guard your life!

Dorm. Do you still love me?

Lady Dav. Dearer than life itself.

Dorm. Give me a noble proof.

Lady Dav. What wou'd you have me do?

Dorm. Thus, thus for ever let me clasp you to my heart!—here let me hold you!—this be your asylum! Destined for each other, wedded in our souls, Heaven, that has re-united us, now sanctifies our privileged embrace. Spoil'd of my heart's best treasure, thus, my Louisa, by that dear, loved name, thus, thus I claim thee,—now no tyrant husband, no base, sordid uncle shall divide us more.

Enter SIR EDMUND TRAVERS, *unperceived.*

Sir Edm. Say you so, sir? I'll try that point with you however.—O, scandal to your family! is this a situation for a wife to be found in?

Lady Dav. No, I confess it—your reproof is just.

Sir Edm. Well, sir, and this is honourable conduct, I suppose. (*To* DORMER.)

Dorm. Sir Edmund Travers, I wou'd recommend it to you to keep your own temper, and not practise upon mine too far: And let me tell you, sir, there is a mean and tricking quality in all you do. When hearts like ours are rent asunder by device and cunning—when forgery's base artifice is call'd in aid to separate affections, they will meet again, in spite of hell itself; and if you have stolen by surprise upon that tender moment when the most rigid virtue softens to endearment, beware of false conclusions, nor from the foulness of your own imagination, judge of ours.

Sir Edm. Fine talking! but as I have not outlived my senses, am in possession of my eyes and ears, and have unluckily some interest in the reputation of my own niece, I shall take the liberty of appealing to Lord Davenant against such proceedings.

Dorm. Madam, I do beseech you, undeceive your uncle; I suspect he does not know the treatment you receive; he could not else thus obstinately persist to ruin you.

Lady Dav. Leave us together then, and I will speak: Retire into that room—nay, I request you will. (*Exit* DORMER.) Now give me patient hearing.—'Tis not from consciousness of guilt, nor to avoid a fair discussion of my sentiments for Captain Dormer, I wou'd wish you to desist; but from a knowledge, which you have not, of Lord Davenant's

disposition. You think him a kind husband:—because I've troubled you with no complaints, you think I've none to make. You are in an error; and so long as error caused content, I left you in it; now that it wou'd lead to misery, I warn you of its danger. My lord and I are on the point to part: Hitherto he has no shadow of complaint against me; if you resolve to give him one, give this—report this indiscretion—swell it into criminality; perhaps he'll thank you for the office; but the time will come, when you'll reproach yourself.

Sir Edm. And this you think will blind me:—You mistake: I see your drift. I know you are unhappy with your lord, but I also know it is your attachment to Dormer, and his return, that make you so: Lord Davenant told me so himself:—the fault is all your own: you have driven him mad. Now, therefore, if you will solemnly engage your word to me never to see Dormer again, I'll stifle what is past; I'll still acknowledge you, protect you; and if Lord Davenant then abandons you, I'll receive you in my house.—Now what do you say? I put you to the proof.

Lady Dav. 'Tis fairly offer'd; but if every earthly comfort was in your disposal, and they could only be obtain'd by my renouncing, absolutely and for ever, all future friendly intercourse with that much injured man, I wou'd reject them on such terms. When I've said this, I must implore you not to pass unfair constructions on my resolution; for if you can still suspect me, I will pledge my honour to you, never to receive his visits, but in yours or other company:—Will that content you?

Sir Edm. No, no, my lady, nor cajole me neither: you'll not put out my eyes with dust. Nothing but absolute renunciation of that villain will serve me.

Lady Dav. Villain! Do you call him villain?

Sir Edm. You'll find him such to you, incorrigible !—nay, I can now persuade myself you have.

Lady Dav. To my lord then with what dispatch you please. Here comes your judge: prefer your charge against me; I'll abide it.

Enter LORD DAVENANT.

Sir Edm. 'Tis well you are come, my lord. I hope you will give me now a patient hearing.

L. Dav. With such attention as a man not overstored with patience can command, I am prepared to hear you. When last we met, you took me in a hasty moment; if I have offended you, impute it to infirmity, and now proceed.

Sir Edm. So, so! he's quiet now; his phrenzy comes by fits. (*Aside.*) When I bestow'd this lady's hand in marriage to your lordship, I had hope I gave you what wou'd make your life a happy one; had it proved otherwise, I trusted that the fault wou'd not be hers; for she was born of worthy parents, carefully brought up, and educated in the habits of obedience.

L. Dav. So much by way of preface; now to the point.

Sir Edm. Though she is under the dominion of a husband, still, as her uncle and her guardian, I am interested in her conduct; and when I meet her on the road to ruin—when I surprise her lock'd in the embraces of a lover—I hold it a point of honour thus to bring her face to face, and put you on your guard.

L. Dav. Lock'd in the embraces of a lover! of what lover?

Sir Edm. Dormer.

L. Dav. Do you call him a lover?

Sir Edm. Can you make that a question? Was he not ever such?—You know he was. She'll not deny it: question her yourself.

L. Dav. I will not trouble you, madam, with many interrogatories: be pleased to answer plainly. It is objected to you by your uncle that you love young Dormer?

Lady Dav. I have cause.

Sir Edm. Astonishing assurance! Have not I forbade you—

L. Dav. Be patient, if you please.—You loved him before you married me?

Lady Dav. I own it.

L. Dav. You was trepanned into a marriage; not only forgery was employed, but force. Had you been left to choose, you would have chosen Dormer, preferably to all mankind?

Lady Dav. I should.

L. Dav. And was I now to die?—

Lady Dav. I beg you not to put that question.

L. Dav. I shall forbear.—It does not need an answer.—Why, what a criminal you make yourself, Sir Edmund!—You an uncle! you a guardian!—You to conspire and league against a ward, whose happiness you had in charge!—For my share in the fraud, I do repent it from my soul; but I have some excuse:—her beauty, fortune, were temptations in my way; ambition, avarice, desires might urge me on: mine was an interested baseness, yours a natural depravity.

Sir Edm. Hey-day! the fit's returned; you are mad again; one and all mad: 'Tis the distemper of the times: it runs through the nation: hellebore can't stop it.

L. Dav. Fly then, before the infection catches you; keep the small wits you have at home, nor thrust yourself into the sphere of our insanity. When did you ever hear that interference between man and wife was thankfully received, or profitably answered any useful purpose?

Sir Edm. A word with you, madam, before we

part:—Whatever happens, don't come near my doors; look not for your asylum there. [*Exit.*

L. Dav. Ridiculous old dotard! Suffer me to lead you to your chamber: your exhausted spirits must demand repose: give me your hand. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in LORD DAVENANT'S *House.*

CHARLES DAVENANT *and* DORMER.

Dav. I have now, Captain Dormer, told you without reserve the whole, as it has pass'd between your sister and myself, to the minutest circumstance; and I wait your answer, without foreseeing what that may be; for hitherto your silence has been such as gives no light to guess at your opinion.

Dorm. I have heard your story with the deepest attention, for it involves the fortune of an orphan sister, in whose happiness I am closely interested, and of whose reputation I am the rightful protector.

Dav. If you find any cause for discontent in my proceeding, tell it me.

Dorm. I find no cause whatever for complaint; but many many proofs I find of generous manly honesty;—and thus with open arms I take you to my

heart, and lodge you there till it shall cease to beat. When I've said this, I must confess to you there are some painful incidents in your relation. My sister's marriage in Flanders I must consider as precipitate and rash; the evidence of Brooke's decease at Paris was too readily admitted; and the now distressful state of your engagement might have been avoided by those obvious precautions which your interest pointed out. Your marriage also is clandestine; such are rarely happy; and though Lord Davenant's consent wou'd be no recommendation of it to me, methinks it should have been an indispensable preliminary to you.

Dav. I feel the force of all you say. The vehemence of my affection may have out-stept prudence, and my want of confidence in my father may have violated duty, but towards your lovely sister I should hope I stand without reproach.

Dorm. I cannot doubt your honour, and you'll suffer me to add, there does not live a man on earth I should be so proud to call my brother. Here we must pause—Till we have traced the villain out who has abused her confidence, and by a feign'd decease plunged her and you in this distress and doubt, no self-indulging passion must be suffer'd to complete the yet suspended marriage—this promise you will make?

Dav. And keep religiously.—As for discovery, his equipage, I hope, will lead to that.

Dorm. Perhaps it will: if that should be the case, remember, Captain Davenant, 'tis to me he must account. Now I'll go to my sister.

Dav. Do so:—I am sure I need not warn you to speak tenderly to Marianne: commend me to her; cheer her gentle spirits, and assuage, if possible, her anxious thoughts in this uneasy crisis.

Dorm. I'll do my best; but still my heart is heavy. Fare you well. [*Exit.*

Enter LADY DAVENANT.

Lady Dav. Was not that Dormer?

Dav. It was.

Lady Dav. You have told him of your marriage?

Dav. I have.

Lady Dav. Well, and how pass'd it? I'm impatient to be told that you at least are happy.

Dav. Happy! alas—

Lady Dav. What ails you? What has disconcerted you? You have no misunderstanding, sure, with Dormer?

Dav. With Dormer none.

Lady Dav. Your father then?

Dav. I have not seen him. This it is:—I told you Marianne had made a former marriage in Flanders; that her husband, after three months, left her, went to Paris, and there died. She thought herself a widow, till, this morning, after I had left you, and with transport flew to embrace my bride, I found her bathed in tears, and agonized with grief:—The impostor had deceived her; he was living:—she had seen her husband.

Lady Dav. Oh horrible! her husband living!—How have you supported it? What is become of her —of Dormer?—Where will this affliction end?

Dav. I know not. I am now in search of the betrayer.

Lady Dav. Have you no clue to trace him by?

Dav. I think we have; and from a circumstance that I omitted to relate.—How now? What news?

[*A Servant enters, and speaks aside to* DAVENANT.

Lady Dav. Poor Davenant! how I pity thee! Sure I had weight sufficient of affliction. How shall a sorrow-broken heart support such over-whelming grief!

Dav. (*To the Servant.*) Go to your lady: tell her all is well. You'll find her brother with her, Captain Dormer: take him aside, and tell him to repair to

me without a moment's loss. Your diligence shall be rewarded. Go: make haste. (*Exit Servant.*) Now the discovery's out—I told you Marianne had seen her husband; his chariot passing her window was stopt by accident in the street; the mob and clamour usual on such occasions attracted her notice and that of the neighbours: my servant now informs me 'twas the equipage of Sir Harry Harlow.

Lady Dav. What do you say? Sir Harry Harlow's! No; it must not be. Revoke that word.

Dav. Revoke it! Why should I revoke it? No, I'll drag him to detection.

Lady Dav. When did this pass, do you say? Was it this morning, after you saw me?

Dav. It was; I told you that before.—What interests you so deeply for Sir Harry Harlow?

Lady Dav. What interests me! what!—O, Charles—forbear to question me—it stabs my heart.—I do beseech you leave me to myself:—it turns my brain. Give me a minute's recollection. (*Walks aside.*)

Dav. Now, by my soul, 'tis very strange: it staggers me: suspicions force upon me. Nothing is more evident than her disorder: it smote her like a stroke of death—nay, 'tis most palpable: her eyes are staring wild with horror. Ah! 'tis so; she loves him. Curse upon him! he has prevail'd with her too.—Heavens! what a character is overthrown.

(*Aside.*

Lady Dav. Charles, Charles, you must be patient in this business. Do not trust your information too implicitly, nor hurry on an explanation that you may repent of.

Dav. Must I be patient, madam? Must I permit the direst villain to survive? And do you plead for him?—No; if my honour was not pledged to Dormer not to take up this affair without him, by my soul, a moment shou'd not pass before my sword shou'd make its passage to the traitor's heart.

Lady Dav. What traitor's heart? You must not call him traitor.

Dav. Amazement! Lady Davenant, you confound me:—'tis too flagrant. Have I not proof certain?

Lady Dav. No, no; I tell you, wretched man, you have no proof—and when you have—

Dav. What then!—Why, then I'd drag him from the altar; stab him, though your fond arms protected him.

Lady Dav. You don't know what you say.

Dav. 'Tis you that say you know not what;—'tis you, alas! whom this confusion painfully betrays;—you, whom a fatal weakness forces to protect the blackest of mankind. By Heaven, that gave me life, I thought you late a miracle of truth and goodness: I approach'd you with a reverence that border'd on idolatry: I leave you now with mournful pity and regret: I go, because I can no longer bear to be spectator of the fall of such exalted virtue. [*Exit.*

LADY DAVENANT, *alone.*

Lady Dav. Lost, lost, for ever lost! Go, miserable youth; enjoy the respite of a short mistake: the moment that clears up my innocence lets fall despair on thee. What a tremendous scene will that unfold! A father husband to thy wife!—It must be so: a multitude of circumstances now confirm it.—This, this it is that solves the mystery of his unnatural conduct; this is the latent dagger of his mind; this is his horror; this the injury so unatonable to Dormer. The very hour in which he took Sir Harry's equipage; his journey to the continent; his stay abroad, and his long silence whilst in absence from me, rise in horrible array, a host of witnesses, deposing to the dreadful truth. Inextricable distress! What can be done? I see no light.—Fate labours as with mother's pangs, and the fell babe of horror, hell-begotten, presses to the birth.—Father of mer-

cies, give me thy support!—Without there! Who attends?

Enter Servant.

Is your lord still at home?

Serv. My lord is in the library with Sir Harry Harlow.

Lady Dav. Has Captain Davenant been there?

Serv. No, madam; he has this moment left the house.

Lady Dav. Run to my lord; tell him to give nobody admittance till I have seen him; and desire Sir Harry Harlow to come hither immediately. (*Exit Servant.*) I am not in the fault; I have not driven him to this desperate act. Be witness for me, truth, I have not wilfully occasion'd his disgust, but studied to my utmost to obey and please him. If by Sir Harry's means I can hold off this fatal explanation, till Lord Davenant takes his measures, an interview perhaps may be avoided, that is horrible to think of. —I sent to you, Sir Harry.

Enter SIR HARRY HARLOW.

Sir Har. I flew with ardour at your summons; and I await your pleasure with a heart that throbs to serve you—with a heart, dear lady, that can only cease to love when it shall cease to beat.

Lady Dav. 'Tis well: I mean to put your friendship to the proof.

Sir Har. Friendship indeed! But call it by what name you will, my life is yours; command it to what purpose you see fit.

Lady Dav. Pray don't mistake yourself or me.—You lent your chariot to my lord this morning?

Sir Har. Madam!

Lady Dav. Come, come, I know you did: I saw it at my door: I saw him enter it.

Sir Har. Then I must not dispute the point with you—to any other questioner, I yield no answer.

Lady Dav. 'Twill be a service most essential to my happiness, if you will consent to screen Lord Davenant for a while. I wou'd not put this on you, but for most pressing reasons; nor do I mean that any risk or imputation thence arising shou'd ultimately fall on you; therefore I do beseech you, for an hour or so, that you will be invisible to all inquirers, but above all to Captain Dormer and Charles Davenant. Return not to my lord, but quit this house immediately; and if I might prevail, you shou'd not enter your own for some time: they'll seek you there, and if their fury shall compel you to an explanation, I must tremble for the consequences.

Sir Har. Most amiable of women!—I perceive your drift: you act too nobly by an undeserving husband; but I make no appeal; implicitly I shall obey, because 'tis your command—and though my life were made the sacrifice, what were more glorious than to die for you?—One word, one kind approving look can overpay the purchase: grant that before we part, and at your feet I dedicate for ever to your service my devoted heart.

Enter DAVENANT *hastily, followed by* DORMER.

Dav. Villain, stand up, and answer me. Now, Dormer, now will you believe me? Have we found you, sir?

Dorm. Draw, wretch, for I am Dormer.

[*He does not draw.*

Lady Dav. You are mad. Or sheath your sword, or pass its murderous point through me.

Dorm. O shame, shame, shame! and have I lived to see it? O mortal blow to modesty!—Let there be no fidelity in woman, no faith henceforth in man!—Come forth, thou shelter'd coward! answer with

thy life: it is not for thine own enormities alone; 'tis for hers also thou must now account.

Sir Har. I'll answer nothing, but to every tittle of your charge to say, 'tis grossly false. Settle your own precedencies; I am ready.

Lady Dav. Will you hear reason? Dormer, Charles, I do conjure you both, forbear!

Sir Har. Give their rage way: they chuse a notable occasion, in a lady's presence, to display their valour.

Dorm. Our wrongs are such as will not bear delay; nor will we trust to one who can change names, shift persons, counterfeit even death itself to ruin innocence, and mock avenging justice.

Sir Har. I don't know what you say; but such assassin-like attacks deserve no answer, nor admit of any explanation. You, Mr Davenant, know me well: you know I may and will be found:—appoint your place, I'll meet you.

Dav. Follow us then.

Lady Dav. Help, help!—You shall not stir.—This is too much.—You are deceived: he's innocent.—Help, help!

[*Runs to the door, and meets* LORD DAVENANT.

Enter LORD DAVENANT.

L. Dav. What is this uproar? Who has frighted you?—Hah! Dormer here?—Sir Harry, what has pass'd?

Sir Har. Pass'd, my lord! Nothing; all is mystery to me.

L. Dav. Why did she scream out?—A word with you. [*Takes* SIR HAR. *aside.*

Dav. (*To* DORMER.) Dormer, contain yourself: there's something here that's dark and terrifying: say nothing to my father.—Let us withdraw, and wait below; there can be no escape. Nay, follow me, I do conjure you.

Dorm. O, Lady Davenant, reconcile my mind to his mysterious conduct, or break my heart at once.

[*Exit with* DAVENANT.

Lady Dav. What then becomes of mine? It bursts, distracted with o'erwhelming grief.

Sir Har. Look to my lady.

Lady Dav. No, no; regard not me; I shall not fail; Heaven sends me strength for my appointed task.—Let me be private with you.

[*To* LORD DAVENANT.

L. Dav. Not for the world.—My thoughts are terrible; I am possess'd by fiends.—Stay, and be witness to my shame, whilst I confess the black account which I must pass with Dormer: I have betray'd his sister; ruin'd her by forgeries and falsehoods, as I did you, Louisa—married her.

Sir Har. Infamous deed!

L. Dav. Yes, sir, there is a rebellion in my blood; his sword must let it out: therefore no more, but let me pass.

[*As he is going out,* LADY DAVENANT *stops him.*

Lady Dav. Hold, hold! you must not stir.

L. Dav. What is't you mean? Why do you cross me thus?

Lady Dav. To save you from a meeting worse than death.

L. Dav. To save your lover from a meeting that may lead to death.—Oh! whilst you live, speak truth:—'Tis love of Dormer raises this alarm. Have not found the cause?

Lady Dav. No, you've not found the cause—you'd that you never could!

Sir Har. Be caution'd by your lady, and impute to her concern no other than the purest motive;—my life upon it, you will find it such. Alas, unhappy man, what treasure have you cast away? Hear her, console her, be advised by her; recover, if you

can, her forfeited esteem: She is a miracle of goodness.

L. Dav. Dost think me so far sunk in honour, as to shrink from this discussion? Dormer's entitled to an honourable satisfaction, and I shall give it him immediately. Before we part, however, Lady Davenant, let me own that I am penetrated with remorse for my conduct to you. Though I ask nothing for myself, I am not out of hope that you will cast an eye of pity and protection on that guiltless sufferer, who, if I fall, will be the partner of your widowhood:—she is young and beautiful; and if your influence over Dormer is exerted in her favour, she may retrieve the unhappy error into which I led her.—Farewell.

Lady Dav. Yet, yet prevent him.—Stay.—She has a husband.

L. Dav. What do you tell me? Speak that word again.

Lady Dav. She has a husband—and that husband—how shall I pronounce it?

L. Dav. Go on: I'll have it, though it breathes destruction.

Lady Dav. That husband is your son.

L. Dav. Death to my soul!—My son!

Lady Dav. Your son this morning married Dormer's sister.

L. Dav. Why do I live a moment?

[*Lays his hand on his sword.*

Sir Har. Stop your rash hand.—What phrenzy seizes you?

L. Dav. Why does the earth not yawn, and whelm me to the centre?—Oh, what a day of dreadful retribution!—Why was this marriage secret?—Which of you was privy to it?

Lady Dav. I knew it not, nor had suspicion of it:—few hours are past since he disclosed it to me.

L. Dav. Fatal concealment!—horrible event!—

O God, O God, into what misery have I plunged my son!—Does he know what I have done?

Sir Har. Nor he nor Dormer know it:—Take this comfort also to your heart; it is as yet a marriage but in form: the day is not yet passed in which their hands were join'd.—Heaven in its vengeance has remember'd mercy.

L. Dav. Call my son here directly.

Lady Dav. There let me interpose again. Take a short time for serious meditation: we will assist your thoughts. Your friend here has already struck one spark of light amidst your dark despair; patient reflection may bring more in view. Perhaps this meeting with your son, which you, in your mind's present agitation, are for hastening, prudence may postpone.

L. Dav. Speak on, for there is something in your voice like comfort; something that falls upon my ear like music in the dead of night, after distressful dreams.

Lady Dav. Oh! if a few calm words can lull your ear, think how repentance may assuage your soul. —For so much of your offence as falls on me alone, I thank Heaven's mercy for its aid, I can forgive it; nay, my lord, I have forgiven it.

L. Dav. Nay, but you must abhor me; darkness must be less opposite to light, than I to innocence: —So loathsome am I to myself, I shou'd despise the person that cou'd pity me.

Sir Har. Come to your chamber; follow your guardian angel where she leads you.—If I can serve you in this melancholy hour, command me; if I am in your way, dismiss me.

L. Dav. I pray you leave me not—I have a thing to tell you—It is not known to man, nor can your heart conceive how dire a deed I've had in meditation:—There was a thought struck on my mind too terrible for utterance; but it is past: this stroke,

that cuts up all resource of hope, cuts up the bloody purpose that I had in hand, and now I feel, as it were, two natures:—My good and evil genius seem at strife within me: this touches me with human kindness and remorse; that tears me with despair and horror. How it will end I know not; for all command is lost, and my mind drives like a wreck before the tempest.—Go with my Lady Davenant; stay by her, I beseech you. I will retire to my chamber. Farewell! [*Exeunt severally.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in LORD DAVENANT'S *House.*

DORMER *discovered alone.*

Dorm. 'Tis near an hour I've waited here, and still this man appears not. I shou'd suspect he had escaped me, if Davenant had not positively said, there was no other way for him to pass but through this room. No solitude can be more silent than the house.—They are in conference still. My mind is on the rack; I am tortured with uncertainty.—He comes—My Lady Davenant!

Enter LADY DAVENANT.

Lady Dav. Is your friend yet return'd?

Dorm. No, madam; Captain Davenant is not yet come back.

Lady Dav. But you expect him soon?

Dorm. With every moment. Has your ladyship any thing in command for him that I can deliver?

Lady Dav. No, sir: my servants have my orders, when he comes, to beg that I may see him instantly. [*Going.*

Dorm. Stop, I beseech you, for a moment, stop! Is it with him alone you will confer? Am I not worthy of a word—a look?—or will you turn, but when Sir Harry kneels?

Lady Dav. Yes, I wou'd turn to Dormer, cou'd I see him.

Dorm. Am I not Dormer? Is he not before you?

Lady Dav. To memory he is present, not to sight. The picture of him in my mind is clear and spotless, traced with benevolence, and truth, and courage; it beams with candour, and it glows with love. —The picture in my eye is false and faded, smeared by some spurious dauber, patch'd, distorted; the open smile of honour wrinkled to a leer of livid jealousy—a libel, not a likeness of a man. [*Exit.*

Dorm. Hear only what I have to offer: stay, and hear me.—She's gone, and gives no ear.—Unjust, disdainful!—Ha! by my hopes, her scorn shall be repaid—Her paramour approaches—You are found, sir—

Enter SIR HARRY HARLOW.

At last we are alone; and though I find you under Lady Davenant's roof, yet your protectress being absent, that shall no longer be your safeguard.

Sir Har. I own I wish'd to have avoided you; but since we are met, proceed to state your charge.

Dorm. No wonder you should wish to avoid me, for you have done a base, unmanly injury to a defenceless orphan;—by a pretended generosity you

stole into her good opinion, married and abandoned her. Base as this is, there is a meanness in the act, that makes it more detestable than open villainy :—You counterfeited death :—Paltry expedient! which not only gives your tongue the lie, but stamps it on your life.—Draw then! defend yourself; for 'tis not now a counterfeited death, but the reality, that must determine one of us.

Sir Har. Take your own course. I shall repel assault; but first, by way of caution, hear me :—'Twas once my chance, as it is now, to be call'd out by a rash angry boy, to answer, with my sword, for an imputed injury to a lady, whom he took on himself to protect. I met him, for his rage was deaf to reason. Being master of the sword, I soon disarmed my hot antagonist :—When I had given him life, I gave him proof of his mistake :—the youth was satisfied, and saved. A second instance may not be so happy.

Dorm. I understand you; but the proofs, which, in this instance, follow'd, now precede our interview. You'll not deny the equipage was yours; that you was in it; that my sister saw you, call'd out to you to stop: you did; but looking out, discover'd her, and basely took to flight?—These facts bring home to you unanswerable proof, and leave you nothing but confession and atonement.

Sir Har. This arrogance compels me to an act which, in compassion to your youth, and the misfortunes that hang over it, I fain would have avoided. I draw my sword, not to answer to your charge, but to chastise your insult :—Still I bear so little of revenge about me, that if you'll satisfy my honour with the least apology, I promise you an hour shall not pass before I'll clear my innocence.

Dorm. That you can never do; for if by any palliation you could hope to smooth away your injuries to my sister, still there remains a black account of

crimes, which nothing but your life can expiate. These eyes have seen you at the feet of Lady Davenant.

Sir Har. Stop your blaspheming tongue!—Die, madman, in your error. [*They pass at each other.*

MARIANNE *runs in, followed by* DAVENANT.

Mar. Hold, for the love of Heaven!—Charles, Charles, beat down their swords. See, see, my brother bleeds. [CHARLES *interposes.*

Dorm. 'Tis but a scratch.—Stand off.

Mar. What is your quarrel? Why does he assault you?

Dorm. Can you ask that? Has your fright blinded you? Do you not recollect that face?

Mar. I never to my knowledge saw that gentleman before.

Dav. I did suspect this, Dormer; and on that account I brought your sister with me.

Dorm. Have patience, if you please.—Come hither, Marianne; look at that gentleman: Do you forget, or will you not acknowledge your husband?

Mar. Husband! I tell you he's a perfect stranger.

Dorm. If you say this from fear, or false respect for what may follow to affect my safety, you do wrong both to yourself and me; therefore I charge you answer me sincerely, and without disguise.

Mar. As Heaven shall judge me, I have spoke the truth.

Dorm. I'm satisfied.—Sir Harry Harlow, I perceive my error; and for so much as affects this lady, I sincerely ask your pardon.

Sir Har. So much for one of your mistakes; there is another, which you must atone for.—A little patience will clear all; reserve your spirits for that trial.—You now conceive the reason why my lady Davenant interposed in my behalf: she knew my

innocence, and therefore stopt your hand; when you know hers, the sword you pointed at my breast take care you turn it not upon your own: none but the same defender can preserve you.

Dorm. I own the circumstance of this mistake has cleared that part of Lady Davenant's conduct; it only now remains to account why you was found upon your knees before her.

Sir Har. How else should I approach her? When you know all her virtues, you will worship too:—the presence of an angel must demand our knees.—But you are wounded, sir; you bleed.

Dorm. 'Tis nothing; a mere scratch; your point just glanced upon my arm.

Sir Har. 'Tis well it is no worse. Good night to you. [*Going.*

Dav. Before you go, one word with you, Sir Harry.—I am certainly inform'd the person we are now in search of was in your chariot this morning, when an accident stopt it in the street where this lady lives: I demand of you, as a man of honour, to inform me who that person is.

Sir Har. When you take that for granted, Charles, which I have not admitted, and thereon ground a question I'm not bound to answer, you must give me leave to say, you have already had the only satisfaction I shall give. I have been once arraign'd, am now acquitted, and shall no longer plead to interrogatories.

Dav. Permit me then to tell you, sir—

Sir Har. No, tell me nothing I ought not to hear; for I regard you much too well to start a quarrel with you;—rather let me tell you, Charles, what you should hear, and thank me for:—You and your friend there have arraign'd a lady perfect in all goodness, construing the purest motives into criminality. I see her coming, and shall leave you this fair opportunity to make atonement: when you have

done that, if you have any farther difference to compose with me, I shall attend your call, when, where, and how you please. [*Exit.*

Enter LADY DAVENANT.

Dav. But that I know your heart, I should despair of pardon: suffer me to hope you will forgive my most unjust suspicion, and receive into your favour my beloved Marianne.

Lady Dav. This is the lady—if I survey her for a while with melancholy admiration I shall not offend. —Is this a form to combat rude misfortune? That it should enter in the heart of man to injure such a creature! That artifice and wrong might be employ'd to gain her, I can comprehend, but that they should be a resource for leaving her, surpasses my conception. I find till now imagination could not reach the guilt of her betrayer.—Give me your hand, my dear: you come into a melancholy house: I cannot welcome you as I would wish.

Mar. And cause there is for melancholy: whereever I am present, it pursues me: I am the bitter fountain of your sorrow. My fatal marriage with this noble youth has been the bane and poison of your peace. I pray you send me hence; dismiss me like a thing abhorr'd; a pestilence, that, if you harbour it, will pay your hospitality with death.

Lady Dav. Not so; misfortune strengthens your interest in my heart: You have more claims upon me than you know of. You are still married in your heart to Davenant; so was I once to Dormer.

Dorm. Oh! I shall sink with shame.

Lady Dav. Had I been, as you are, thus wretched, thus betray'd, nor wife nor widow, but a nameless orphan, the sport of villainy, affliction's victim—you had a brother once, in whose brave heart I shou'd have raised that pity you excite in mine.

Dorm. Oh, plead for me, some friend! I dare not speak.

Lady Dav. No, Dormer, no: when I forgive, you shall not owe it to an advocate—But let that rest; things of more moment press.—You must not see your father. [*To* DAVENANT.

Dav. Why not? Your words alarm me.

Lady Dav. His situation would alarm you more: some strange disorder suddenly has seized him.

Dav. Say rather some strange passion of the mind.—You told him of my marriage?

Lady Dav. I did, and he received it like a stroke of death; his frame convulsed with passion.—I must for ever lament your not consulting him.

Dav. Does he resent it highly?

Lady Dav. We'll talk of that hereafter; for the present you must avoid an interview. If you remain in the house, retire to your own chamber, and let her accompany you—take Mr Dormer with you too.—Go, my dear child, go with your friend—so you may call him still.

Mar. My heart's too full to utter what it feels.—In the expressive language of your eyes I read my melancholy fate.—Farewell!

[*Exit with* DAVENANT.

Lady Dav. Well, sir, you'll follow that unhappy pair—or do you wait to spring some new detection?—Fie upon you!—What blemish does your scrutinizing eye discover, that you so stedfastly peruse me over?—Oh, that a taint so sickly as suspicion should find admittance in a hero's breast!

Dorm. (*Runs to* LADY DAVENANT, *and falls at her feet.*) Hear me, divine Louisa, hear your repentant Dormer:—let me kneel for pardon.

Lady Dav. Rise, rise!—This is no time for explanation.

Dorm. Stop not my words, now they have found their way, but let me pour them and my tears, thus

kneeling at your feet.—Before my eyes lose sight of you, confirm my pardon; tell me you forgive what my impatient phrenzy, what my mad suspicion utter'd.—Penitence ne'er struck a human heart more deep than mine.—Demons have cursed the sun, I have done more—I have arraign'd thy virtue.

Lady Dav. Rise, I desire you, rise! You have my full forgiveness.

Dorm. Oh! first and last sole object of my heart! how can I thank thee as I ought? [*Kisses her hand.*

Lady Dav. If to regain and keep your place in my affection is your wish, spare the attempt to thank me, nor by this warmth of passion draw aside my thoughts from the sad theme that fills them. That I have loved you, Dormer, and still love, superior to disguise, accept my free confession; but when example meets me of the precipitancy of passion in Davenant's case—of the deceitfulness of gratitude in Marianne's, I will be guided only by esteem, and on your delicacy, on your discretion, in this mournful crisis, will depend, if that affection which I now acknowledge shall subsist or cease. [*Exeunt.*

Enter LORD DAVENANT *and* PAGET.

L. Dav. The air is fresher here: motion revives me.

Pag. I wish it may; and yet your colour changes; your eyes look heavy, and betoken pain.

L. Dav. I've wearied them with writing. Take the papers—This to my son; to Lady Davenant this; and this to Dormer.—Ah!

Pag. What's that; another pang?—and now it shakes you like an ague fit. Pray be persuaded; let your physician be sent for.

L. Dav. What can he do? My wounds are in the soul. Give me your arm.

Pag. How cold your hand is on me!

L. Dav. No matter; 'twill pass off.—I'm better

now.—Make all things ready:—I will be gone to-night.

Pag. How can you travel with these pains upon you?

L. Dav. I shall feel no pains upon my journey.

Pag. I fear, my lord, you are not fit to undertake your journey.

L. Dav. I fear so too—but, be that as it may, let me have all things ready.—Have you put up those parchments for my son?

Pag. They are in the box, seal'd and directed for Mr Davenant.

L. Dav. That's very well—Now tell my lady that I desire to see her.—A word with you before you go:—You will find I have not forgot your services; they wou'd have done credit to a better cause; but as I have put you now above necessity, I hope I have put you above meanness also.

Pag. It has not been my choice, but my misfortune. I shall send Lady Davenant to you, and hope she will prevail with you to postpone your journey. [*Exit.*

LORD DAVENANT.

L. Dav. My journey must be quickened, not postponed.—This medicine works too slowly—but here's a remedy of more dispatch—Apply it then!—Misery like mine acquits the suicide:—When law strikes short, justice should arm the culprit's hand.—The occasion's apt.—In death there's but one pang, in life a thousand thousand multiplied calamities.—Now, now I'll do it.—Hah! I'm interrupted.

Enter LADY DAVENANT.

Lady Dav. I am told you have been seized with sudden indisposition.—What is the matter? How are you affected?—Are you resolved upon departing immediately?

L. Dav. I am resolved: my mind is gone before me; and when I am departed, I shall bequeath you to your heart's first choice.

Lady Dav. What do you meditate?—Your words, your looks, are ominous. What was that thing you huddled in your bosom as I entered?—My lord, my lord, beware of self-destruction!—Your bosom labours, your breath flutters, and your eyes—Oh horrible! what are these ghastly symptoms?

L. Dav. If any consolation could have rescued me, thine would have been the medicine of my mind—thou wouldst have been the saving angel, thou most excellent, most injured of women!—But I have sat in council with my reason, ransack'd all the resources of my soul, and questioned every rising thought, if it could shew me hope:—In all my composition there is not one trace; night and despair possess me, and there is nothing like a ray of light, save only what the mortal drug administers, that now is sapping the strong-hold of life.

Lady Dav. Poison!—Oh let me fly, and bring you instant help.

L. Dav. Hold, I command you:—Assistance is too late; nor would I suffer it, if it came.—'Sdeath! I were a beast without a soul;—I, that have kept my station with the highest, now to sink where infamy won't own me;—the outcast of society, the pointing-stock of scorn, and feed on offal scraps of pity, thrown by charitable fools to comfort me!—It is not to be borne!—Despair seized me, and I took poison.

Lady Dav. Be not extreme with him in judgment, merciful Disposer!—He comes, but not in confidence—despair compels him.

L. Dav. I thank you.—O Louisa! best of women!—If I had confidence to pray, it should be for such blessings on your future days, as might redeem and recompence your sufferings past. And yet I'll

strive—Oh horrible! It must not be—My soul is rent with agony.—Methought, as I looked up, I saw a thousand threatening faces, that forbade my prayer. Oh hide me in your arms!—Stand off again, lest I infect and stain your purity with my unholy touch.—Blest may you be! thrice blest in Dormer's arms!—May Heaven shower down on your united hearts perpetual harmony and love! And for the hateful barrier of my life, thus, thus I burst it. [*Stabs himself, and she catches his arm.*

Lady Dav. Ah!

L. Dav. Let go my arm! My soul is in a loathsome prison, and this stroke delivers it.

[*Stabs again, and drops on one knee, holding the dagger still in his hand.*

Lady Dav. Help! for the love of Heaven, some help!—

Enter DAVENANT, *and, at another door, Servants.*

O, Charles! your father has destroy'd himself.

Dav. Merciful God! he is dying.

Lady Dav. The agonies of death are on him. Assist me to take him off:—I can't support him—he will die upon the floor.

L. Dav. Yes, yes, 'tis over.—Tell not my son the cause till I am dead. This was the only kindness I could shew him. I am sorry to present a spectacle so bloody to you both; but poison work'd too sluggishly, nor could I bear its agonies.—Oh, keep her from the sight of me!—She comes.

Enter MARIANNE, *followed by* DORMER.

Mar. What have we here? Oh horrible! What dying man is this?

L. Dav. Oh hide me! cover me with clouds. I sink, I die.—Have pity for me, Heaven!—'Tis past. [*Dies*

Mar. Let me come to him; let me see his face. 'Tis he! Avenging Heaven! it is my husband.

Dorm. Lord Davenant your husband!—Compicated misery!

Dav. Her husband, and my father!

Lady Dav. The horrid mystery is solved.

Mar. Then let me die—let my heart burst at once, and bury me for ever in oblivion.

Lady Dav. No, whilst my arms, my friendship can uphold you, you shall never fall.—Come from the body, Charles——cease to contemplate that bloody object.

Dav. Nay, but be silent—It is done—he's dead. I will be dumb henceforth; but have some care of me, for if my reason fails, and not remembering he was my father, I shou'd shock Nature's hearing with a curse, 'twill be the brain's depravity, and not the heart's.

Lady Dav. Alas, unhappy friends, my spirits will not serve to give you consolation; but let us patiently await, and it will come from Heaven:—The same dispensing hand that to the blameless bosom deals the wound, will, in its own good time, administer the cure. [*Exeunt.*

THE

BOX-LOBBY CHALLENGE;

A

COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, HAY-MARKET.

BY

RICHARD CUMBERLAND, Esq.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

GEORGE WATERLAND,	*Mr Caulfield.*
CAPTAIN WATERLAND,	*Mr Barrymore.*
SIR TOBY GRAMPUS,	*Mr Aickin.*
SQUIRE ROBERT,	*Mr Suett.*
OLD CROTCHET,	*Mr Baddeley.*
JACK CROTCHET,	*Mr Bannister, jun.*
FULSOME,	*Mr Bland.*
JONES,	*Mr Maddocks.*
JOE,	*Mr Benson.*
WAITER at the Hotel,	*Mr Cooke.*
HAIR-DRESSER,	*Mr Waldron, jun.*
LADY JANE DANVERS,	*Mrs Gibbs.*
DIANA GRAMPUS,	*Mrs Harlowe.*
LÆTITIA RAYNER,	*Mrs Goodall.*
THEODOSIA, wife to CROTCHET,	*Mrs Hopkins.*
LINDAMIRA,	*Miss De Camp.*

SCENE—*London.*

THE

BOX-LOBBY CHALLENGE.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

A Back Room to a Printer's Office, CROTCHET, *with a Table before him, in his Chair, reading.* THEODOSIA *enters from the side.*

CROTCHET, THEODOSIA.

Theo. Nobody in the office? Nobody to tend the trade? Mr Crotchet, what are you about?

Crot. Reading.

Theo. Is that a printer's business?

Crot. No, but what can I do with my authors? No one else reads them, so I must.

Theo. Get a fresh set, and clear away your old hackneys; they are crippled founder'd, work'd off their legs—

Crot. And starved. Has Fulsome call'd with his dedication?

Theo. No.

Crot. Must the press stand still till that fellow's mud deposits?—What did Slang want in the office?

Theo. Credit for a quire of foolscap.

Crot. You didn't give it him?

Theo. Who had been the fool then?—Where's our Jacky?

Crot. Up all night, a-bed all morning; a whelp, a blockhead as he is. I thought to have made a great man of him, and educated him accordingly. I set him out in the world as printer's devil to one of the first presses in the capital.

Theo. And a pretty devil he has been ever since.

Crot. I then gave him a spell with our neighbour the rag-merchant, at next door.

Theo. What could he learn there?

Crot. What could he learn? The elements of his trade, the embryo of all good writing before it goes to the paper-mill. He might have studied letters at the foundery itself, and the most valuable part of the chief libraries in the kingdom at the bookbinder's:—Nobody can say I baulk'd Jack in his education.

Theo. Why did'nt you give him some grammar-school learning?

Crot. What good had that done him? Learning only cramps the genius, and grammar does but cripple the style: Give me an author of a free, clear mind. Why isn't he up in his cock-loft now with pen and ink? There's fresh air that would help his fancy—there he might court the Muses and the Graces.

Theo. Instead of which, he courts them in the streets to the music of the watchman's rattle.

Crot. It seems then that he makes some noise in the world.

Theo. By the way, husband, what is this new work of Fulsome's which you are printing?

Crot. A Treatise on Education.

Theo. Has that fellow any wit?

Crot. He has cunning, which is cousin-german to it. Fulsome was usher to a country school; he married the *femme de chambre* of a rich dowager, who took him into her family, and made him bear-leader to her booby son; he danced him a tour through Europe, and published it in two quarto volumes at his return, pirated from the journals of other travellers, and stuffed with drawings of temples, bridges, aqueducts, and amphitheatres most of which he had never seen, and none of which he had ever examined. The book sold, and with the profits of that and a small pension, Fulsome makes a shift to live.

Theo. Enough. I see him entering the office.

Enter FULSOME.

FULSOME, CROTCHET, THEODOSIA.

Ful. I kiss your hands, worthy Mr Crotchet; I pray you lay me at the feet of your amiable spouse.

Crot. Compliments apart, let us to business.—Where's your Dedication of the Treatise?

Ful. In the hands of the dedicatee, Mrs or Miss Diana Grampus; I protest I know not by which title to address her, for she is a virgin in the bloom of half an hundred; vain, rich, pedantic, and not a little partial to your humble servant.

Crot. But what is this to our business?

Ful. Patience, *padrone mio!* it is to your business: In the first place, you must think a dedication of this sort, where all the virtues, not to be found in her character, are to be hammer'd out of my brain, is no perfunctory job: In the next, I must tell you that I have an interest in Di Grampus, on which I mean to found a project for making the fortune of a friend of mine.

Crot. Meaning yourself, I suppose. [*Aside.*

Ful. My heroine has a nephew, the only son of Sir Toby Grampus, now coming to town for the purpose

of putting this uneducated cub under her protection; I have recommended the tour of Italy, and the proposal takes.

Crot. So you're going to lead another bear round the world.

Ful. Not so; my travels are finished, and I have made over my interest to your son John.

Crot. My son! my son Jack a travelling tutor!

Theo. And why not, Mr. Crotchet?

Crot. Because I think his travels point to a quarter where few young gentlemen go for education.

Ful. Don't be discouraged; I hold it for an axiom, that every man is fit for every thing he can get. John is giddy, to be sure, but, with a few of my instructions, he will pass: He does not want address.

Crot. Call it impudence, and you are right.

Theo. For shame, husband! He has no more impudence than a man of fashion should have. I wish, indeed, he had the languages.

Ful. Why, that, perhaps, that wou'd be well if he had; but I hope it will be got over—a foreign lacquey must supply that defect: If he is ignorant of the living languages, we must puff him the more for his knowledge of the dead ones.

Crot. Dead ones indeed, and dead they will remain for ever, if they wait for his bringing them to life.

Ful. Why, surely he had an university education.

Crot. You are laughing at me, methinks: You know well enough what education he has had.

Ful. True, true, as you say, my zeal there went a little too far; for I told Mrs Diana he was a scholar of the first class at Cambridge, carried all the prizes, all the medals. It was an error on the right side, for she believes it, and it is not our business to undeceive her: We must stand by what we have said. —But where is he all this while?

Crot. Where he always is till noon—fast asleep.

Ful. Let him take his nap out. Send him to me as soon as he is dressed; let him come to my lodgings; I'll give him his cue, and carry him to Di Grampus, where, I warrant you, we will clinch the business. Good-morrow to you. I shall expect him about noon. [*Exit.*

CROTCHET, THEODOSIA.

Crot. The fellow's mad.

Theo. You are, methinks, to stand in the way of your son's preferment.

Crot. Jack Crotchet a travelling tutor! Was there ever such a chimera?

Theo. Many such, and successful ones. Our Jack has a good deal of ready wit, knows the world, has no false modesty, and with good clothes on his back, is a personable fellow. Who is more likely to make his fortune among ladies of a certain cast?

Crot. Egad, Theodosia, thou hast struck the only flint that has any fire in it. I begin to think better of the project than I did. Call him up, however; call him up: We can soon rig him out from the warehouse.

Theo. Why, Jacky; Jacky, I say—Jacky Crotchet!

Enter JACK, *in total dishabille.*

JACK, CROTCHET, THEODOSIA.

Jack. What's the matter with you? Here am I. Set me a chair, mother! (*Yawns and stretches, begins to tie up his garters, and button his clothes.*) What a bawling you make! Cats and creaking hinges cannot jar my nerves more insufferably than your Jackey, Jackey! vulgar, puerile, gross—leave off that familiarity

Crot. Where have you been, sirrah, to be thus bedevil'd?

Jack. Kept it up—prime spirits—best of company—

Theo. What a figure you have made of yourself! Why, your coat-lappet is all over dirt.

Jack. Yes, the gentleman's shoes were not over-clean that made free with it.

Crot. You have been kicked, have you?

Jack. Box-lobby quarrel, nothing more—gave him my card—never put up with an affront, damme.

Crot. What do you mean by your card?

Jack Sword and pistol.

Crot. Zooks! we shall have a duel in the house.

Jack. No, no, no, you won't; there'll be no duel, unless the gentleman, whose name is on the ticket, chuses to fight—always make free with a friend on those occasions.—Borrow'd this frock-suit—found the owner's ticket in the waistcoat pocket—carried it off with spirit—left the house with a high hand—foot slipt—tumbled over a fruit-woman—saved half-price, and pocketed three oranges in the scramble.

Crot. You'll scramble to the gallows.

Jack. You think so—Differ from you—much doubt if I shall reach the pillory, and that will be a falling-off in the family; one step lower in the scale than my predecessor.

Crot. Rascal, who told you that I have been in the pillory?

Jack. A long-ear'd goddess, gossip Fame, says you had so many eggs for breakfast, you've never had a stomach for an omlet since.

Crot. Get out of my presence, or I'll send this volume at your head.

Jack. Better let that alone: you have had enough pelting, methinks.

Theo. Fie upon you, Jackey: treat your father with more respect.

Crot. A miscreant, a reprobate, to talk to me in such a style—I give him up; I'll have nothing more to say to him; I cou'd have made the fellow's fortune for him, but I would not step across the gutter to save him from a gibbet. [*Exit.*

THEODOSIA, JACK.

Theo. There, there! now you've ruin'd all. Such an offer, such a lucky hit—Do but hear reason, and I'll stand your friend still.

Jack. Well, well, I will hear reason—but he was set in the pillory, wasn't he?

Theo. Pr'ythee, what is that to the purpose? Here has been Mr Fulsome here, who has recommended you to Mrs Diana Grampus to travel with her nephew.

Jack. Diana Grampus! what sort of a fish is she?

Theo. A fish do you call her? she's as rich as a Jewess, and her nephew is son and heir to Sir Toby Grampus, a man of great estate.

Jack. How old is Diana?

Theo. About fifty.

Jack. An antiquated goddess of fifty: Damme, I'll make up to her.

Theo. How you rattle! Mind your own interest, and make up to dame Fortune.

Jack. No, I'll attack Diana of Ephesus, and set fire to her temple. Well, but after all, mother, he was in the pillory; confess.

Theo. Hold your tongue about the pillory, and get some decent clothes on your back; I'll provide them for you. Come, set about dressing yourself, there's no time to be lost. You must call upon Fulsome at his lodgings, and he will carry you to the lady patroness.

Jack. Well, well, get me something for my breakfast in the first place: Send for a fellow to pinch these hang-dogs into buckle; get me a fashionable suit,

and I will sally forth to the chace of Diana: Rat me if I think any old girl of fifty can withstand me.

Theo. Now, Jack, now is your time; if you will but mind your hits, and follow the instructions Mr Fulsome shall give you: Don't be rhodomontading in your idle way to expose yourself to the lady, who will be sure to find you out. Put on a grave appearance before her, and leave the rest to your friend: All you have for it is to look wise and keep silence.

Jack. Say no more, say no more; get my breakfast, set my things to dress, and I'll be with you.

Theo. Well then, I'll about it. [*Going.*

Jack. Hold! a word with you; before I stir a foot from this place, tell me, in plain truth, whether the old boy was set in the pillory, aye or no?

Theo. Obstinate, perverse!—I tell you then he was—now be content. [*Exit.*

Jack. That's enough—he was in the pillory. Oh! that I had been in the way to have seen him! I am glad I know the truth: I have a fine pull upon him: he hasn't heard the last of it, I can tell him.—Oho! Lindamira—

Enter LINDAMIRA.

LINDAMIRA, JACK CROTCHET.

Lin. So, rattlebrain, what's the news with you? From what watch-house, night-stall, or cyder-cellar have you redeem'd that dirty dissipated person of yours, to put to shame the modest eye of day?

Jack. The modest eye of day! From what conceited, canting, coxcombly, drab-composed novel have you filch'd that silly phrase?

Lin. I filch from none; my phrases are original, my scenes are Nature's self, my style Pactolus rolling over golden sands. Here is my manuscript; a novel, picturesque, descriptive.—Salvator, Claude, Poussin, Vernet, may blush to see themselves out-

done: My sun, moon, stars; my mountains, hills, vales, rivers, lakes; my woods, heaths, rocks, and ruins, are not dawbings upon canvas, but all embroidered upon cloth of gold.

Jack. I would not give you one farthing for the sum total of them; I abominate descriptions. Have you nature, humour, wit, character? Is your hero a man or a monster? Your heroine a woman or an angel? Do your people make love, Lindy, as you and I have made it, according to the rules of flesh and blood; or as Sylphs and Sylphines do out of æther and gas?

Lin. Read and reform.

Jack. Why should I do that which my author does not? But come, since you are so zealous for my reformation, bring your novel with you up stairs, and you shall read it to me whilst I dress.

Lin. 'Tis to the toilet of the ladies, not of the men, my compositions are addressed.

Jack. Well, and I will carry it to the toilet of the ladies; let me have a sample of it, and I'll lay you into old Di Grampus for a dedication.

Lin. Diana Grampus! the very lady I am going to, the first patroness to a dedication in all England. How came you to know her?

Jack. Know her, child! I'm going to be married to her.

Lin. Oh you monster! you villain! have you forgot your vows, your promises to me?

Jack. What's a coming now? Gentle novelist, ruffle not the sweet serenity of your soul! Imitate your own heroine:—

> Soft as the dew-drop on the blushing rose,
> The pearly tear shall trickle down your nose.

Lin. My nose! you fool, my cheek you should have said.

Jack. Yes, but cheek would not rhime to rose—so come along, for I have no time to lose. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Room in a Hotel. A Waiter passes over the Stage; Joe follows, carrying his Master's Clothes.

Joe. Hark ye, you boy! skipjack! tapster!

Wait. What do you want, Clodpole? Is that your way of speaking to a waiter? I fancy you have been more accustomed to ale-houses than hotels.

Joe. Ohoa! you call your house an hotel, and yourself a waiter—very well! then pray, Mr Waiter of an hotel, send me hither one of your barbers to comb out Sir Toby Grampus's perriwig.—Do you understand that?

Wait. I'll send you a hair-dresser; we don't call 'em barbers, unless we mean to affront 'em. Where the plague have you lived? [*Exit.*

Joe. So, so! here's a new language to learn; a man's mother-tongue, I perceive, is of no use in this place.

Enter Hair-Dresser.

Your humble servant, sir! Pray what am I to call you?

Hair-Dres. Didn't you send for a hair-dresser? Where is the gentleman that wants to be dress'd?

Joe. There; there he is, upon that block.

Hair-Dres. This! this! who does this belong to?

Joe. To my master. Whilst I am brushing his coat, you will amuse yourself with combing out his perriwig.

Hair-Dres. Damme if I wou'dn't as soon comb out the Tower lions as this rum gig of a caxen.

Joe. Rum gig of a caxen! what's that?

Hair-Dres. Why, 'tis a second edition of Sir Cloudesly Shovel in the tombs. Your master will look for all the world like King Charles in the oak, with his bush at his back, brother Brush.

Joe. Brother Brush! that's not my name; my name is Joe Thresher; I have lived by that name, and none other, in Sir Toby Grampus's service these thirty years come next Lammas.

Hair-Dres. Very right, very right! the thresher, you know, naturally follows the whale; and which now is of the longest standing in the family, you, or that damn'd old quiz of a coat you are dusting?

Joe. Damn'd old quiz of a coat! what a graceless reprobate you are! Damme, how you barbers swear! where do you expect to go?

Hair-Dres. Half the town ever before night, then to my girl and my bottle. As for your wig, comb it those that like, I'll not touch a bristle of it. [*Exit.*

Joe. Come in, Master Bobby, come in.

[SQUIRE ROBERT *looks in.*

SQUIRE ROBERT, JOE.

Sq. Rob. Ah, Joey, my hearty fellow; where's old dad? not bolted yet?

Joe. No, no, but I look for him every moment. Pr'ythee, squire, do you mean to go in that trim to Madam Diana's? They say she's main proud, and has a world of fine quality folks at her house; she'll turn up her nose at you in that bumpkin jacket.

Sq. Rob. If she don't like the bumpkin as he is, she may leave him; dost think I'll cut my jacket to her cloth? not I; I'll not wear a tail where my head grows for her or any body.

Joe. But what will you say when the pretty misses come to jeer and flout, and call you country putt,

and the like? You'll be spruced and powder'd out, I warrant me, with the best of 'em, before many days are over your head. I do hear it said, squire, (but that's between you and me) that Madam Di means to send you out upon a progress into foreign parts beyond seas.

Sq. Rob. With all my heart, I love to be moving; all places are alike to me.

Joe. Why that's honest; to be sure 'tis a fine thing to travel from place to place, and see strange sights, and live amongst wild men and wild beasts, lions and tygers, and mountain cats, as some gentlemen tell us of.

Sq. Rob. See 'em, Joe! by the living, I'll see 'em and eat 'em too.

Joe. Do, Master Bobby; if you love me, do eat a lion.

Sq. Rob. I will, I'll eat him raw, and hash the snout of an elephant in a rhinoceros's shell.

Joe. Oh rare!

Sq. Rob. Why, I tell you I have been with the rhinoceros this very morning, on purpose to make acquaintance with him before we met in his own country. A civil obliging gentleman show'd me the way; but, in his hurry, I suspect he mistook my pocket for his own, for I've left my purse, watch, and handkerchief behind me; nothing remains in my pocket but three golden pippins, which I suppose were not to his liking.

Enter SIR TOBY GRAMPUS, *in his Night-Gown and Cap.*

SIR TOBY, SQUIRE ROBERT, JOE.

Sir Tob. What's a clock, Joe?

Joe. Close upon noon—your honour never lies so long in the country.

Sir Tob. Nor sleep so little;—such a bawling

crew of watchmen; they may be well called guardians of the night, for they take care nobody shall fall asleep in it—But come, we must bustle; sister Di will be expecting us—Ah, Bob! I did not see thee.

Sq. Rob. Honour'd father, I beg your blessing.

[*Kneels.*

Sir Tob. Bless you, bless you, my boy, and make you a good man, and an honour to your family!—Help me on with my coat, Joe. You must stick tight to it now, Bob, and buckle to your business, and attend to your masters.

Sq. Rob. Oh, yes, father, you know I had made some progress before I left home; I cou'd compass a tune or two upon the French-horn, and handle the quarter-staff pretty smartly.

Sir Tob. Pooh, pooh, mun, you must think of other matters than French-horns and quarter-staffs—Give me my wig.

Sq. Rob. Why, isn't grandfather painted with a French-horn across his shoulder in the hunting parlour at home? And who was so famous at the quarter-staff as uncle Robert? His name is up I'm sure in Monmouthshire, and how should I be an honour to my family if I don't keep up to the spirit of it?

Sir Tob. Yes, yes, but times are alter'd, Bob; times are alter'd—Why, sirrah, you have not comb'd this wig out of buckle.

Joe. Please your honour, here was a prig of a barber came to dress it, who swore, damn him, he'd as soon comb the lions in the Tower; he wou'dn't touch a bristle of it—never heard such a reprobate in my days.

Sir Tob. Oh, that I had the knave in Monmouthshire, I'd make him sing another tune!—But what was I saying to you, Bob? Ay, this it was—Times are not as they were, my lad; the good days are over; plain folks are not thought of, and landed gentlemen are little valued but for rearing stock and

sowing turnips; fine folks now carry no horns across their shoulders, they wear them in other places. A country gentleman of a good estate in your grandfather's time, and a baronet, as he was, wou'dn't have troubled his head with Greek and Latin, and laws and politics, farther than opposing the minister, right or wrong, he cared not which; for why? because he knew it was for the good of his country.

Sq. Rob. Very true, father, that comes of course.

Sir Tob. But now, do you see, they will have a reason for every thing; ay, and oftentimes so many reasons for the same thing, that the plain truth is puzzled by their proving it. In old times, every body sat silent in company with their superiors, nobody spoke till they were spoken to; no tongue was heard at the table but the master's of it; now they are all talkers, and no hearers, such a gabble and a din; every priggish puppy gives his puppily opinion.

Sq. Rob. Very true, father, and so long-winded, that it sets me a yawning. (*Yawns.*)

Sir Tob. This being the case, Bob, it's high time for the old families to look about 'em; a true Grampus must not let the small fry get over his head; therefore, you see, that you may be able to keep pace with the world as it goes, and not to be thrown out of the talk, or made to take every thing upon trust that people choose to talk about, but see with your own eyes, and judge for yourself, I propose, by your aunt's advice, to send you forth upon your travels; and, as you have shewn such a talent for music, by your performances on the horn, you shall start for Italy.

Sq. Rob. And what shall I see there, father?

Sir Tob. See! why you'll see the Pope of Rome, and the twelve Cæsars, and the naked Venus, and St Peter's Church, and the Burning Mountains, and all those sort of things.

Joe. Oh, good your honour, let Master Bobby go

see the crocodiles, and the pyramids, and the rhinocerosses, all alive, in their own country.

Sq. Rob. Yes, pray do; I may see them at a cheaper rate there than I can here, and I have a mighty liking for wild beasts.

Sir Tob. Boy, thou shalt see every thing; and, that thou may'st do nothing at second hand and by halves, I will have thee go to the very head of the Nile, and drink of the spring that waters the whole realm of Pharaoh.

Sq. Rob. Enough said, father. I sha'n't seek to go any further, especially if I meet with no better entertainment; I shall then be well content to come back into Monmouthshire, where I can drink out of a cellar, which, for my part, I prefer to all the springs in the creation.

Joe. All the world to nothing. There you are right, Master Bobby.

Sq. Rob. Let me only have a good companion to drink with me by the way, and not one of your bushy-wig'd bear-leaders, with a sour temper and a solemn face.

Sir Tob. Never fear that, lad; thou shalt have no pedagogue nor parson, to travel with his school-books in his pocket, and rummage old walls for inscriptions, and hunt after tombs. What is it to thee, who never read a line of Virgil, where he lies buried? Thy companion shall be a man of fashion, prudent but cheerful, cautious yet good-humour'd, moral but not austere: one that has read men more than books, and knows the world, not by the map and the globe, but by observation and experience. Such an one I hope to find of sister Di's providing, so let us lose no time, but set forward. Joe, tell the people to call us a coach. (*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

GEORGE WATERLAND *discovered sitting; his Servant* JONES *attending.*

Jones. Captain Waterland is below, sir, and wishes to see you.

Geo. Wat. I can't see Captain Waterland; I can see nobody. Did not you tell him how ill I am?

Jones. I told him you was somewhat indisposed?

Geo. Wat. Is that all? Can you look in my face, and see the havock that disease is making, and only say I'm somewhat indisposed?

Jones. Upon my word, sir, there are no symptoms of disease in your countenance that I can discover.

Geo. Wat. None that you can understand, I dare say, Jones; therefore let my brother up, only caution him against noise: I must not be hurried. (*Exit* JONES.) There is nothing I more dread than Harry Waterland's boisterous spirits—they bear him up, and crush me. Oh! how this younger brother of mine puts me down in all opinions! There's Lady Jane Danvers, though our marriage writings wait the signing, takes no pains to conceal the preference she gives him over me:—he has the smile, the jest, the whispers, the familiar playful raillery; I have the graver moments, the dull yawning formalities, that seem a task of compliment—there is my malady; that's a disease for which there is no remedy.

Enter CAPTAIN WATERLAND.

Capt. Wat. Hey-day, brother George, what's the matter now? Is this a time to be sick, when you are on the point of marrying the finest woman in England?

Geo. Wat. You think her such, I dare say; but if you love me, Harry, do not speak so loud, nor tread so heavy; noises rack my brain.

Capt. Wat. I'll take care; but I hope you are not really indisposed, only a little tremulous, perhaps, as the moment of your bliss approaches; were I in your case, George, my nervous system would not be a whit less unquiet than your's.

Geo. Wat. Very likely; you are an admirer of Lady Jane's.

Capt. Wat. All the world admires her.

Geo. Wat. Happy woman! You attended her to the play last night?

Capt. Wat. I did so; and, by the way, did you hear of the fracas I got into with a quarrelsome fellow in the lobby?

Geo. Wat. Not I; but what is that when you've so fine a lady in your charge? A quarrel is the luckiest thing in life, sets off your gallantry, makes her the talk of the town, and you the happy favourite of the fair whom you defend.

Capt. Wat. If I thought it would do that with the lady I had the honour to defend, O George, how happy I should be!

Geo. Wat. No more upon this subject, if you please.

Capt. Wat. Well, I have done.

Geo. Wat. You certainly do not know the state of my feelings, or you would not sport with them as you do.

Capt. Wat. Say no more, brother, I have done.

Geo. Wat. I don't wish to be told of the charms

of Lady Jane: no man can keep the affections of a woman, whose charms all other men are praising: I want no idol for the world to worship.

Capt. Wat. Few men in love have your philosophy.

Geo. Wat. I'm not in love; with beauty at least I'm not in love; a sympathizing tender friend is what I want: my health is gone; was Lady Jane design'd by nature to nurse a bed-rid cripple?

Enter JONES.

Jones. Lady Jane Danvers is at the door, and desires to know if you are disposed to accompany her to Hyde-park this morning.

Geo. Wat. Impossible! Tell Lady Jane I am not able to stir out of my chair: go, tell her so.

(*Exit* JONES.

Capt. Wat. Come, come, don't alarm her with such a message; jump up, and tell her so yourself.

Geo. Wat. Sir, I am, at this instant, so totally bereft of all my faculties, that I do not think I cou'd rise from this seat, if the room were in flames.

Capt. Wat. Alas! poor George, then I must leave you, for positively I must see Lady Jane.

Geo. Wat. Hold, sir! I bar that interview.

(*Starting up.*

Capt. Wat. Astonishing! Are you in your senses?

Geo. Wat. Perhaps not; but I have so much reason left, as serves me to discover what this meeting leads to.

Capt. Wat. Then you must have an intuition supernatural—In the mean while, you have found your legs, and yet the house is not on fire. I give you joy of your recovery.

Enter JONES,

Jones. Lady Jane Danvers is coming up the stairs, sir! (*Exit.*

Geo. Wat. This is too glaring—too barefaced.

Enter LADY JANE.

Lady J. What is the matter? For the love of Heaven, Mr Waterland, tell me what has happen'd to you? Are you wounded—are you hurt? I understood from your servant, you was not able to stir.—(*He retires and sits down.*) No answer; what is the meaning of all this? Can you explain it to me?

Capt. Wat. Not I; he seems very irritable.

Lady J. Have you had any difference—what has ruffled him?

Capt. Wat. I know not; but, if you please, I will leave you together: I rather think I am unwelcome.

Lady J. Don't leave the house; I have something to say to you about last night's affair.

(*Exit* CAPT. WAT.

Geo. Wat. (*Rising and advancing.*) Right, madam, 'tis but justice to reward the gallant champion, who turns out in the defence of beauty.

Lady J. You know the story then, it seems.

Geo. Wat. All the town knows it, or will know it, when so fair a lady is the object of a quarrel in a public theatre, and her hero gains such honour and such favour by defending her.

Lady J. And do you, from your knowledge of the lady, think, that Harry's gallantry last night advanced him in her favour?

Geo. Wat. I'm sure it did, and think such favour cheaply purchased at the risk of my life.

Lady J. You do?

Geo. Wat. By heaven, I do: I never own'd a drop of blood, that I would not have shed in her defence: but when I find myself thrown off at a distance from all hope, and see those eyes bestow their smiles on him, whose slightest glance would pene-

trate my heart—'tis torture, 'tis distraction: I am lost.

Lady J. Why this it is then that destroys your health? these are your sufferings, this is your distemper?

Geo. Wat. This, and none else—Go, madam, go to my happy brother; bear him the beauteous prize he fought for, but tell him, when I yield you up——

Lady J. Me, me! yield me to Harry Waterland? Hold there, my friend, I have not given my consent to that, and he'll not thank you for the compliment.

Geo. Wat. What do you mean? Of whom but you have I been speaking?

Lady J. If you have heard the story, you must know Lætitia Rayner was the beauteous prize for which your brother fought.

Geo. Wat. He did not tell me that—And you believed that I was suffering all these agonies for Lætitia?—Oh, Lady Jane, am I so little known to you?

Lady J. Oh! Mr Waterland, am I so totally unknown to you—Jealous of your brother?—Fie for shame!

Geo. Wat. I can't deny it:—circumstances stagger'd me; Harry is a fine fellow; his gaiety amuses you; my dulness damps your spirits.

Lady J. To say the truth, since you took this freak of jealousy into your head, you have not been the liveliest company in the world;—but now let us go to this formidable rival of yours, who is dying to hear some news of Lætitia; and if whispering in a corner raises your bile, depend upon it we shall give you enough to colour your complexion before long.

(*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

An Apartment in DIANA GRAMPUS'S *House.*

DIANA GRAMPUS, LÆTITIA RAYNER.

Dia. Gram. What was this affair that happen'd at the play last night with Lady Jane Danvers and you? Tell me what it was without any prevarication or disguise.

Læt. There is no occasion for any, madam.—A drunken fellow in the lobby, as we were passing to our coach, was insolent, and the gentleman, who had charge of Lady Jane, corrected him: I believe it is no uncommon case.

Dia. Gram. Was he insolent to Lady Jane, or to you?

Læt. I confess, it was to me, madam.

Dia. Gram. And who was the gentleman that corrected this offender?

Læt. Captain Waterland.

Dia. Gram. I guess'd as much; the younger brother of her ladyship's enamorato; a proper champion truly to take up your quarrels, and spread your name about the town as the protegeé of a young rake in the guards, who is first to fight for you, and then graft pretensions upon his gallantry.

Læt. I don't believe Captain Waterland's character warrants any such interpretation.

Dia. Gram. You don't believe!—Miss Lætitia Reyner, of the discreet age of eighteen, and heiress to a great fortune, does not believe that Captain Waterland, a young officer in the guards, and heir to no fortune at all, has any other motive for stand-

ing forth in her defence, but merely to shew his valour, and protect the friend of Lady Jane Danvers:—now then we are at issue—here is Miss Lætitia's opinion on one side and her aunt's on the other—Let the world decide between us!

Læt. Pardon me, madam, I never presume to oppose my opinion to your's.

Dia. Gram. Then, if mine's to prevail, it will be, that you never again are seen of Lady Jane's party to a play; and that you never admit the visit of Captain Waterland in this house, or meet him in any other.

Læt. Your first command I certainly can obey; your second I may innocently transgress.

Dia. Gram. Lest that should happen, I shall require of you to deny yourself the supreme felicity of visiting Lady Jane.

Læt. Very well, madam; it must be as you please. (*Exit.*

SIR TOBY GRAMPUS *and* SQUIRE ROBERT.

Sir Tob. Oh! my dear, dear sister. (*Salutes her.*

Dia. Gram. You are welcome to town, brother.

Sir Tob. I'm charm'd to see you; and how have you been this many a long day? Why, you look vastly well, grown quite plump, and protest it becomes you. Bob, make your reverence to your aunt.

Sq. Rob. Reverend aunt, how goes it with you? (*Kisses her.*

Dia. Gram. So! here is room, indeed, for amendment, brother: the Graces will have work enough on their hands, before they can mould this clay into courtesy. I am afraid my friend Robert is as mere a bumpkin as ever.

Sir Tob. I hope not—I hope not. I have done my best for him; taken this long journey purposely to consult you how to proceed in his education.

Dia. Gram. I never heard he had any education.

Sir Tob. His mother to be sure did keep him too much at home; but then 'twas all repaid to us in his morals; there we gain'd every thing.

Dia. Gram. His morals, indeed! Take my word for it, the morals of Monmouthshire won't keep long in the atmosphere of London.

Sir Tob. Well, Bob, why so silent?

Sq. Rob. I'm on the safe side for that, father.

Dia. Gram. Why you are not the worse company for it at present, nephew Robert; when you come home from your travels, you will have something to tell us worth our hearing.

Sq. Rob. Yes, most travellers have.

Dia. Gram. I have made it my business, brother, to seek out a proper governor to accompany him on his tour: a learned person of my acquaintance, himself a traveli'd man, has recommended a young gentleman of talents by the name of Crotchet; I have not seen him; but, from his friend's report, I augur well of his qualifications.

Sir Tob. I hope to goodness he is not one of your prim pedantic chaps, that are only fit to chop logic and cap verses!

Dia. Gram. Quite the reverse; diametrically opposite to that character: he describes him to be gay, facetious, easy, and well-bred; a man, in short, of the world, who rather strives to hide his learning, than make a parade of it: Mr Fulsome tells me that I should not find out in a twelvemonths' acquaintance with him, that he understood one word of Greek or Latin.

Sq. Rob. I am sure I should not.

Sir Tob. Young?

Dia. Gram. A youth, but manly, discreet, and strictly moral.

Sir Tob. Of a good family?

Dia. Gram. Very ancient, but decay'd: of the

Crotchets of Cornwall, a Saxon family, long antecedent to the Roman conquest.

Sir Tob. He'll do, he'll do; he's the very man that will do.

Sq. Rob. Pray, aunt, did you ask him if he can sound the French-horn?

Dia. Gram. The French-horn, child! why do you ask that?

Sq. Rob. Because father says I am to go up the river Nile, and the French-horn sounds well upon a water party.

Dia. Gram. The river Nile, indeed! The river Tiber will be the boundary of your peregrinations: in Rome you will contemplate the venerable remains of ancient magnificence; there you will tread on classic ground, and repose yourself on the bosoms of the arts and the muses.

Sq. Rob. Oh, charming! I shall sleep most deliciously!

Dia. Gram. There, whilst you perambulate the celebrated Pantheon—

Sq. Rob. I thought it was burnt down, aunt.

Dia. Gram. Pooh!

Sir Tob. I protest to you, sister Di, I was in the same error with son Bob.

Dia. Gram You were, indeed; and in error you will both remain:—Like father, like son; very suitably adapted to the latitude of Monmouthshire, but most lamentably unqualified to breathe the pure æther of Italy.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr Fulsome to wait upon you, madam.

Dia. Gram. Is there a gentleman with him, a young gentleman?

Serv. There is, madam.

Dia. Gram. Shew them up. (*Exit Servant.*) Sir Toby, I must request that you will delegate this

conference to me without any interruption on your part, which can only puzzle and impede the negociation.

FULSOME *introducing* JACK CROTCHET.

FULSOME, JACK, SIR TOBY, SQUIRE ROBERT, DIANA.

Ful. Most incomparable lady, I have the honour, with profound respect, to present to you my friend Mr Crotchet, who is ambitious to prove himself worthy of being considered as your protegeé, and most devoted servant.

Dia. Gram. Mr Fulsome, I can truly assure you, that there is no person in the whole circle of the literati, under whose auspices a new acquaintance can come so recommended to me, as when presented by your hand, and back'd by your testimony.

Ful. Your approbation, madam, is fame, and your patronage, fortune.

Jack. Zooks! I shall never keep pace with this. (*Aside.*

Sir Tob. Do you mind this, Bob? This is true breeding—listen, my good boy, and learn. (*Apart to* SQUIRE ROBERT.

Sq. Rob. Look, father, look! that fellow's back is made of whalebone: Shall I ever make such a bow as my tutor does? not I to the Pope of Rome himself. Egad, he must lift up his toe pretty high, if I am to kiss it.

Sir Tob. Hold your tongue, and observe your aunt; the Pope's a ninny to her; she carries it bravely: 'Fore George, she's an honour to the name of Gramptus.

Dia. Gram. I understand your delicacy, Mr Crotchet. By referring me to your friend, you avoid self-flattery; it impresses me in your favour—I love humility.

Jack. I persuade myself you do, and let me hope you will permit humility at all due distance to love you.

Dia. Gram. Oh, sir! sentiments so elegantly couch'd must ever be pleasing—Here is your pupil, if you can inspire him with your address—

Jack. How long has he been in your society, madam?

Dia. Gram. A few minutes only; he's but now arrived.

Jack. Then there is some hope: had he been a single day in your company, unreform'd of his rusticity, I should have despaired of rendering him any service.

Dia. Gram. I give you joy, brother; I flatter myself we are in a right train.

(*Apart to* SIR TOBY *in a whisper.*

Jack. Will it do, Fulsome?

Ful. Admirably; you have hook'd her. Go on and prosper.

Jack. Never fear me.

Dia. Gram. I am told you are a perfect master of the learned languages.

Jack. I am so far master of them, that I keep them at a proper distance: There is nothing I so much abhor as bringing them into the company of the ladies.

Dia. Gram. They'll furnish many pleasing meditations when you are upon classic ground.

Jack. Very possibly, at present I've no call for them.

Dia. Gram. Permit me to ask which of the Roman poets is your favourite?

Jack. Oh! the vengeance!—Which of the Roman poets do I prefer? Really there are so many of them that I am rather puzzled to say which is best, but, I think, take him for all in all, Elzevir is the fairest type.

Dia. Gram. Elzevir! I apprehend he was no poet.

Ful. True, madam; but he was a printer of the poets, and my friend thought you was enquiring which edition he prefers. Horace I know is his poet: he and I have many amicable disputes about our respective favourites, Horace and Virgil.

Jack. Yes, yes, but we won't dispute about them now.

Sir Tob. What a vast fund of learning my sister Di is possess'd of!

Sq. Rob. Do you think it does her any good, father?

Dia. Gram. I have a slight acquaintance with the Latin tongue; Mr Crotchet will greatly oblige me if he will repeat an ode of Horace—any one you like best, sir, they are equal to me; I have no preference.

Jack. Nor I, Heaven knows! Fulsome, help me off.

Ful. Now, Crotchet, I stand a fair chance of my penalty, and if you spout one line of Latin in this lady's company, before Heaven I'll exact it.

Dia. Gram. What do you mean by that, may I ask?

Ful. Only that he is bound to me, madam, in the penalty of an hundred pounds, if he talks Latin in the ladies' company. 'Twas a trick he had when he came fresh from college; and so, to break him of it altogether, I laid him under this forfeiture: Now, as I think he can hardly resist your commands, I stand fair for my hundred pounds.

Dia. Gram. On no account will I permit it: I withdraw the ode of Horace, and think that, if there was a trace of pedantry in your friend's character, you cou'd not take a better method for curing a bad habit. And now, Mr Crotchet, let me introduce you to Sir Toby Grampus and my nephew.

Sir Tob. Learned sir, I'm your very humble ser-

vant. I understand you are of an ancient house in Cornwall; I respect antiquity of family: The Grampuses are not mushrooms; they did not spring up in a day. Bob, make your bow to Mr Crotchet.

Sq. Rob. Give me your hand—If you and I are to be friends and cronies, the sooner we get rid of ceremony the better. I am overjoyed to hear you are bound not to talk Latin.

Jack. To the ladies, remember. To the learned Dons in Italy, Latin or Greek, or what they like best: It's all one to me.

Enter Servant.

Serv. A gentleman at the door wishes to speak a word in private to Mr Fulsome upon particular business.

Ful. Madam, I ask a thousand pardons for such a freedom: I don't know what gentleman can have particular business with me. Did he give you his name?

Serv. No, sir.

Dia. Gram. No apologies, Mr Fulsome.—Shew the gentleman into the parlour. (*Exit Servant.*)—Come, we will adjourn to the library; I must shew Mr Crotchet my collection.

(FULSOME *follows the Servant.*
The rest go out together.

SCENE III.

Changes to a Parlour.

FULSOME, CAPTAIN WATERLAND.

Capt. Wat. Is your name Fulsome, sir?

Ful. My name is Fulsome.

Capt. Wat. And is this your ticket?

Ful. This is my ticket—My name is upon it, and my place of abode.

Capt. Wat. Was you at the theatre last night?

Ful. I was at no theatre: I am not in the habit of frequenting them.

Capt. Wat. I perceive I am betrayed into a mistake: You certainly are not the person who delivered this ticket to me in the lobby last night in consequence of a little fracas. If you know any person likely to have made free with your name in that way, I shou'd be glad you wou'd direct me to him.

Ful. Upon my word, it is impossible for me to say where I may have dropp'd a ticket of this sort, or who may have found it. My acquaintance is pretty numerous, and as I guess the purport of your enquiry, I shou'd be loth to fix it upon any one in particular.

Capt. Wat. The person my affair was with, is a young man, speaks quick, was fluster'd with liquor, and dress'd in a pale green frock, with a scarlet work'd waistcoat.

Ful. I know no gentleman of my acquaintance who answers to your description in dress or otherwise.

Capt. Wat. Sir, I am satisfied, and ask pardon for the trouble I have given you.

Ful. Your most obedient. Oh! Jack, Jack, these tricks will blow you up at last. (*Aside and exit.*

LÆTITIA *runs in, and stops short.*

LÆTITIA, CAPTAIN WATERLAND.

Capt. Wat. Is it possible? May I believe my eyes? Miss Rayner!

Læt. Didn't you know I lived here with my aunt?

Capt. Wat. Not I, by Heavens! Have you recover'd your alarm?

Læt. Yes, yes, but there's no time for questions. I must not stay with you another minute: My aunt will not allow me to receive your visits.

Capt. Wat. May I not hope to meet you then at Lady Jane's?

Læt. Never; that house is interdicted also. Come, come, begone!

Capt. Wat. Cannot I form some pretence for waiting upon you? You have taken my heart from me; am I not allow'd to follow it? My person is not known to your aunt.

Læt. Your name's enough.

Capt. Wat. I'll forswear it for the sight of you—I'll turn to any shape, name, character, or condition, but to look upon you.

Læt. In the first place then, stifle your affair of last night, let us hear no more of that idle quarrel: If it gets wind, I am undone. Promise me this.

Capt. Wat. By all that's beautiful!

(*Kisses her hand.*

Læt. Stop Lady Jane from coming hither: Tell her the interdict that I am under. If you are going to her now, perhaps you will hear of me—Fly!

Capt. Wat. I do fly from all that is lovely under Heaven.

Læt. To Lady Jane's.

Capt. Wat. To Lady Jane's. Farewell!

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

A Room in LADY JANE'S *House.*

LADY JANE, CAPTAIN WATERLAND.

Lady J. Not to keep you longer on the tenters, I have something to communicate to you: an epistle enigmatic, deep, mysterious; yet, without the wit of Œdipus, you may make shift to unriddle it: the writer we'll suppose to be a certain young lady, whom Captain Waterland has no chance for visiting without a stratagem. I'll read it to you.

Capt. Wat. Oh Heavens! I'm all impatience.

Lady J. Oh Heavens! I do not doubt it.

(*Reads the Letter.*

"My aunt has been closely occupied with chusing a tutor for my cousin Robert: I have only caught a glimpse of him, but I am persuaded he is the very fellow who annoy'd us at the play"——

Capt. Wat. The devil he is.

Lady J. Do keep the devil down, and listen—

"He is in high favour, and has undertaken to provide a fencing-master for his pupil; if your friend Captain Waterland knows any professor of the noble science, that he wou'd wish to introduce into my aunt's house, he may easily contrive to take the recommendation out of this fellow's hands by managing his secret; and if the fencer is a real master of his art, and is nimble in his attack, I shall not be sorry to be present at a lecture."

Capt. Wat. Oh! ye loves and graces, all the wits of all the world never compounded any thing one half so exquisite! Dear, dear, adorable Lady Jane, what a celestial friend you are! I'll run home this instant, dress myself in character, take my foils under my arm, post away to aunt Di, send for my Box-Lobby Challenger, make him swear I'm the best master living, or wring off his ears close to his head, and baulk the pillory of its prey.

(*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.

CROTCHET *and* THEODOSIA *meeting* JACK

CROTCHET, THEODOSIA, JACK.

Crot. How now, Jack? Well met. Dosey and I were coming to your friend Fulsome's to enquire after you.

Jack. Were you so, were you so? Hope you've had a pleasant walk.

Crot. Is that all you have to say to us?

Jack. No, 'tis not all—Hope you'll have a pleasant walk back again, for I'm not at Fulsome's.

Crot. I see you are not.—But how goe your af-

fair at the Grampuses'? Tell us that, lad; for we are impatient to hear about it: Will it do, will it do?

Jack. Taste it; take a pinch! I believe it will do better than the mundungus you get in Dyot-street. Treat your nostrils with a snuff. (*Offering his Box.*

Crot. Are you mad? Is this your way of answering my enquiries?

Jack. Can't stop to talk with you in the streets—can't, upon my soul! Gentlemen of my acquaintance will be passing by, and what shall I say if they should ask me who that old don was in the snuff-coloured drab, black stockings, and flaxen bob? Cou'dn't stand their raillery, cou'd not, by all that's elegant.

Crot. By my soul this fellow's impudence puts me down.

Theo. Law! Jacky, what a flashy box you've got.

Jack. Do you like it? So do I—Safe's the word; if any rascal was to pilfer this, 'twou'd be more than a pillory job, let me tell you.

Crot. Rascal, reprobate, miscreant! Is this behaviour to your father? Whose money is it but mine that clothes that back of thine, which I hope some cudgel will belabour? Whose industry but mine supports you in the world? Whose interest but mine procured this situation for you; which you now, graceless upstart as you are, make a plea for putting on the man of fashion, and turning your back upon your parents and benefactors?

Jack. Keep your temper, and I have something to say to you in the way of business—You shall print my journal.

Crot. Print your dying speech and confession, that's what I'll do for you willingly.

Jack. You shall print my journal; brush up your press, get a new type, work off your sheets clean, and you shall print my tour. I have made a progress in it already; I am half way up Mount Ætna;

in a day or two I look to be upon the edge of the crater.

Crot. I wou'd you was in the very centre of it.

CAPTAIN WATERLAND, *after taking a view of* JACK *unseen, runs in and lays hold of him.*

Capt. Wat. Have I jump'd upon you at last?—My Box-lobby friend, as I take it—the very man, by all that's lucky. Come, sir, you and I have an affair to settle.

Crot I'm glad of it, I'm glad of it with all my heart. 'Tis a judgment on you, sirrah.

Jack. I don't know you, sir; I don't know any business you have with me. I never was in the box-lobby in my life.

Crot. Oh monstrous liar! Don't let him out of your hands, sir! He is the very man! I am his father to my sorrow, and I tell you he is the very man.

Theo. For shame, Mr Crotchet! you let your revenge go too far.

Capt. Wat. What do you say for yourself? Your own father witnesses against you. Come, turn out.

Jack. Let me choose my weapons then—I'll take one of these, and you shall take the other.

Capt Wat. No, sir, these are the implements of my profession; these I keep for my scholars; I have a sword at your service.

Jack. A thousand thanks to you; but, permit me to observe, you was an army officer last night, this morning you are a fencing-master; under favour, which do you chuse to be?

Capt. Wat. Either, or both: why do you ask?

Jack. Because, if you teach the sword as a professor, I'm off, 'tis no battle; if you draw as a soldier, I beg your pardon, 'tis no quarrel.

Capt. Wat Well, sir, I have a rod over your head you are not aware of: the lady you affronted last night is niece to your patroness Mrs Diana Grampus.

Jack. Oh! my curst stars!

Crot. There, there! I told you how it would be.

Jack. Hold your tongue: let the gentleman proceed.

Capt. Wat. You have no possible way to escape being disgraced in that quarter, but by recommending me to your pupil as a teacher of the small sword. —Here are my credentials: make your choice! If I am a fencing-master, these weapons have no point; if I am an officer, my sword is through your body.

Jack. Then you are a fencing-master, and shall be a fencing-master as long as you please, and the best that ever took foil in hand; whoever says to the contrary, is a puppy and a scoundrel; and, I take upon me to say, you shall teach my pupil as little or as much of your art as you like.—As I flatter myself you have no designs upon old Di, if there is any thing I can serve you in with the rest of the family, I am your everlasting friend, and most devoted humble servant, till death.

Capt. Wat. I have no plot upon old Di, so far I promise; more I'll impart to you as we walk to the house. (*Exit.*

Jack. Bye, bye! light upon my legs you see—best friends in life—call upon you some evening, when the streets are empty—pleasant walk to you. (*Exit.*

Crot. If fortune carries this fellow through, she certainly must do it to put honesty out of countenance. (*Exeunt* MR CROTCHET *and* THEODOSIA.

SCENE III.

DIANA GRAMPUS'S *House—an Apartment.*

DIANA, SQUIRE ROBERT.

Dia. Gram. I must have some talk with you, nephew Robert; you have no objection, I should hope, to take a little wholesome advice.

Sq. Rob. None at all; I can swallow physic, if it were to do me good.

Dia. Gram. You are now stepping upon the great stage of life; you must begin to exercise, not your limbs only, but your mental faculties; your understanding also, by the help of proper tutors and preceptors. It is a sad thing, you know, to be the dunce of the company.

Sq. Rob. I mostly keep at home with father, and when both are alike, one can't complain of t'other.

Dia. Gram. There's a shrewd truth in that remark.—You read, I hope?

Sq. Rob. No, I never read, I'm like father for that.

Dia. Gram. Nor hear others read to you?

Sq. Rob. Never.

Dia. Gram. How should you get instruction else?

Sq. Rob. I ponder a pretty deal.

Dia Gram. What can you ponder upon?

Sq. Rob. All good matters; nothing else.

Dia Gram. Well, that's not amiss; and indeed your father says you are a very orderly moral young man.

Sq. Rob. Remarkably so.

Dia. Gram. You don't fall in with the vices of the time?

Sq. Rob. Can't endure to hear of 'em.

Dia. Gram. Never drink, nor swear, nor use bad words.

Sq. Rob. Never, never.

Dia. Gram. Nor quarrel.

Sq. Rob. Never quarrel, but I love fighting; there can be no harm in that, you know, for the best man never fails to win the battle.

Dia. Gram. Why, you are a bit of a casuist, Robert; there is some ingenuity in your apology. There is one thing, however, above all, I would guard you against in this wicked town.

Sq. Rob. What is that, pray?

Dia. Gram. The company of naughty women.

Sq. Rob. Oh! aunt, how it shocks me to hear you! As if I'd go to—Oh fie! that ever such a wicked thought should come into your head. Well, if ever I could have believed that my aunt Di.—What would Mr Crotchet say if he heard you talk of naughty women? My goodness, how he does rave about you!

Dia. Gram. About me! Tell me what he said about me?

Sq. Rob. Oh! such things—dear heart, how angry you would be if I were to tell you all!

Dia. Gram. Nay, but tell me all; tell me what he says.

Sq. Rob. He says—let me see—he says, "he could sit the whole day long, and hear you talk"—not about naughty women I should think—"that he would rather be your servant, and wait upon you, than my master with my father's fortune at command"—that's not so civil to me you know;—in short, he says "you are an angel."

Dia. Gram. Does he say that?

Sq. Rob. Yes he does, and more than that: but I must not repeat it to you, for it's a paugh word.

Dia. Gram. I can't believe it, therefore let me have it, whatever it is.

Sq. Rob. Well then, he says, "He had rather take you in your smock"——

Dia Gram. Ah! frightful—he didn't say smock; I'm sure he did not say that.

Sq. Rob. Why then, if it was not smock, it was shift; I won't swear which:—but hush, here he comes; don't blab now, dear aunt!

Enter JACK.

Jack. Do I intrude? Dismiss me if I'm troublesome.

Dia. Gram. That can hardly be; Robert and I

have been moralizing upon the times. You are the pilot to steer him through the rocks and shoals, I have only pointed out on the chart where they lie.

Jack. 'Tis a dangerous channel; I have navigated it with care, know the buoys and bearings, and have sounded every inch of it.

Dia. Gram. So young and yet so sage? I should be curious to know by what happy management you got this perfect knowledge of the dangers without buying your experience at the usual price.

Jack. By never being the dupe of what the world calls love: there is all my art. Love is the one fatal rock on which most adventurers split: By properly estimating what it ought to be, I have never suffered by what it is: I hold it for a sublime, a sacred passion; I reserve myself for something more than mere frail mortality; the woman that captivates me, must have a strong trait of the angelic in her.

Sq. Rob. Mark that, aunt Di; he'll fit you with a pair of wings.

Jack. The sighs of vapours, the languishings of those irrationals, who call themselves lovers, have been my jest and ridicule.

Sq. Rob. Have you never been in love in your life then? Come, be honest.

Jack. You should have asked me that a while ago; the question now is out of time.

Sq. Rob. Egad, you're a deep one. (*Aside.*

Jack. It might savour of vanity were I to say how easily I carry all attacks: Indeed they know me now well enough to know they would but lose their labour: Rank, they are convinced, cannot flatter me, riches cannot bribe, a pretty face makes no impression, and a simpleton disgusts me: In short, after weathering the storm upon the high seas, it is my fate to be shipwreck'd in the harbour.

Sq. Rob. I rather think 'twill be your fate to get

into the harbour, and moor close along side of the hulk. (*Aside.*

Enter LÆTITIA.

Læt. Pray, aunt Di, mayn't I see cousin Robert fight with the fencing-master? They have nobs upon their swords, so they cannot hurt each other.

Dia. Gram. What are you talking of, child, about fighting and fencing-masters?

Jack. I can explain it to you. I have got a fencing-master for my pupil, one that I have known for many years, and can recommend; not a foreign puppy, but a solid, quiet, unpretending man: I always look to the principles as well as to the performances of a teacher.

Sq. Rob. Oh! if you have a good fighting-master, let him come on: I am his man at that sport; cudgels, quarter-staff, or what he will. Cousin Lætitia, I hope you'll be of the party. Aunt Di, you won't say nay—

Dia. Gram. 'Tis not quite a lady's amusement methinks; but if you desire it, Lætitia, you may go with your cousin. The eye of the fair may animate the clown. (*A Servant delivers a Card to* LÆTITIA.

Læt. A card to me!—"Captain Waterland presents his compliments to Miss Rayner, and will be happy to hear she has not suffered from her alarm last night."—Pooh! tell the servant it requires no answer.—Is that right, aunt?

Dia. Gram. Perfectly right, and the only answer it deserves; I am pleased to see you follow my advice.

Læt. I am very happy that you approve of me. Come, cousin Robert, don't let us keep the fighting man any longer waiting. I dare say, aunt, you wonder at my taste, for I know you can't bear such sights; you always hide your eyes when they fight on the stage.

Dia. Gram. I do so, my dear, I do so: My nerves are extremely delicate; every body in their own way.

Læt. Very true, and yet you see I have no design to be a soldier's wife.

(*Takes her Cousin's arm and exit.*

DIANA, JACK CROTCHET.

Dia. Gram. I believe, Mr Crotchet, your attendance may be dispensed with; to form the manners, not to teach the exercises, is your task, and no light one, let me tell you.

Jack. Whilst I am cheer'd with your support I feel it light; when that is lost, I must sink under it.

Dia. Gram. That you will never lose; his clownishness, I fear, is too inveterate.

Jack. Stubborn enough, I dare say, but I apprehend more trouble to myself in preventing new habits than in getting rid of old ones. I have discovered some symptoms already that are rather alarming.

Dia. Gram. What do you allude to in particular?

Jack. Principally in his manner towards the ladies; he has a way of deporting himself in the company of young women, which I am sure you would not approve of.

Dia. Gram. As how I pray? Explain it to me, that I may assist in the correction of it.

Jack. I hardly know how to explain it by words; but if I might take the liberty of shewing you what I mean by imitation, I could make myself understood.

Dia. Gram. By all means; actions of this sort can be no otherwise described.

Jack. In the first place, then, when a handsome woman falls in his way, instead of regarding her with a look, such as I now address to you, modest, respectful, unimpassioned; on the contrary, he stops, stares, rivets his eyes on her's in the eager manner, as, for example's sake, I do on yours, and looks as he would look her through.

Dia. Gram. Oh Heavens! can he look so?

Jack. Now, that, you know, is not proper and decorous.

Dia. Gram. There's a very sensible difference between one look and the other, as you rightly exemplify. But surely, in your case, the copy far outgoes the original; his eyes have no expression, yours are all on fire.

Jack. 'Twas caught from what they look'd on: there was a sympathetic glance went to my heart. We must not practise that again; I shall offend.

Dia. Gram. And I shall pardon;—pray, proceed.

Jack. So, so! the old touch-wood has caught fire. Then again, if he is to take a lady's hand for the purpose of conducting her out of the room, or to her carriage, we'll say—ought it not to be touched lightly, delicately, devoutly, in this fashion, with one hand, and not seiz'd violently with both in this warm impetuous manner, as if he was going to hurry her into a post-chaise for an elopement?

Dia. Gram. Just so; I feel what you mean exactly—and then his boisterous mode of saluting—

Jack. That I did not see; how was that?

Dia. Gram. In the country custom, with both arms round my neck, and a loud smack upon my cheek.

Jack. What! thus for instance—

Dia. Gram. No, no; worse than that.

Jack. Oh, horrible! what, quite as bad as this?

Dia. Gram. Yes, quite as bad. He must be broke of that.

Jack. And so must I, or perish at your feet, unless you pity and forgive.—Oh! thou first only idol my soul ever worship'd; from this moment I renounce your nephew; never will I be exiled from your sight, though hopeless to obtain what I adore; never will I travel over one inch of ground with that young clown; honour compels me to declare to you I never meant

to do it; nay more, it obliges me to confess that I am an impostor.

Dia. Gram. An impostor!

Jack. Yes, loveliest of women, for your sake I am an impostor, falsely pretending to stoop my proud spirit to the servile office of tutoring a dunce, when my ambition was to approach a divinity, whom I had hitherto only admired at a distance. This was the deceit I practised, and know that one, who carries up his pedigree to centuries above the conquest, never will descend to barter independence for an office scarcely above menial: Here then it expires; from your hands I received it, at your feet I surrender it.

Dia. Gram Not at my feet; it melts my heart to see a man so noble, so disinterested, so worthy all my tenderest sentiments, in that submissive posture. (*Raises him.*)

Jack. Ah! madam, it would melt your heart, did you know all my story—Born to better hopes, educated by the most indulgent parents with the fondest care; son of a father, whose public spirit drew him forth into the post of danger, and, after raising him above the heads of his admiring countrymen, exposed him, as it were, upon a scaffold, to the taunts and malice of his unrelenting enemies—I cannot bear to name particulars; my tongue shrinks back with horror; vice triumphed, virtue bled; his manly spirit, still unbroken, stemmed the rage of mobs; he faced his foes and fell—the best of parents fell—I can no more. I think the pillory owes me a good turn for that panegyric. (*Aside.*)

Dia. Gram. Ah, sir, you have a friend that shares in all your sorrows—How sweet is filial piety! how touching, how endearing are those tears!

Jack. Oh! let me vent them on your sympathizing bosom! here let me lie and breathe my last, expiring with excess of love amidst a paradise of sweets.

Dia. Gram. I cannot stand this tenderness; it ba-

nishes reserve—Tell me in one word—Are you sincere?

Jack. Is truth itself to be believed?

Dia. Gram. Faithful and secret?

Jack. Faithful as the pole-star, secret as the center.

Dia. Gram. Then take this ring—with it I pledge my heart, my hand—

Jack. Stop there, I ask no more; you must not name your fortune; my soul disdains the sordid lures of interest.

Dia. Gram. Then be it as you wish; I'll not contaminate your purity of sentiment with worldly offers—we'll only talk of love.

Jack. Egad! I am a little sorry for that though—I have gone too far—(*Aside.*) Come, I was too susceptible; say what was in your thoughts: Love will be lord of every hour; to worldly matters we'll devote but minutes—May I procure the licence?

Dia. Gram. Heavens! how you set my heart a throbbing!

Jack. Pretty flutterer! busy anxious thing! throbbing with generous zeal to lavish all on me.

Dia. Gram. I give myself; the rest is trash, and, as you rightly say, what a soul like yours disdains.

Jack. I wish I had not thought about my soul at that moment. (*Aside.*)

Dia. Gram. You must be husht in this matter as death itself; you see this girl Lætitia, she's my ward, and a rich heiress: I had a wish to marry her to my nephew.

Jack. 'Twill never do; you'll never bring her to endure a clown.

Dia. Gram. I own it does not promise.

Jack. It is not in your nature to force her affections; so generous in your own, you cannot be so rigid over hers. Give her the man she likes, provided he's a gentleman.

Dia. Gram. And let her marry first.

Jack. Humph! is that necessary?

Dia. Gram. 'Twill be decorous at least, seeing I am her guardian: But come, step to the library with me; there we shall be more private; our conference here is liable to observation. [*Exit.*

Jack. Victoria! I have won the fleece, and in faith it is a warm one. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

Squire ROBERT *stript to his waistcoat, his coat hung upon a frame, at which he is pushing with his foil. Captain* WATERLAND *and* LÆTITIA *in conversation apart.*

Sq. Rob. Aha! there I had you—Oho! there I hit you—How many more times must I pink this fellow in the turnip-colour'd doublet? Methinks he looks as if he had enough of it. What say you, Lætitia? Is your lecture pretty well over? If all mine are to be like this, which will make the quickest progress, you or I?

Læt. Oh! thou art a dear good-natured soul, and I shall love thee for this the longest hour I have to live.

Sq. Rob. You love indeed! All your love is bespoke, and what you can spare to me will be no more than cousinly kindness. Now may I be further, if I can guess for the heart of me what you two can have found to say to each other all this while—jabber, jabber, without one moment's ceasing. When I make love, it's at a word—Will you? says I—Nay, says she; let it alone, quoth I, go hang! there's an end of the matter.

Læt. But perhaps I did not answer in that way.

Sq. Rob. I believe not, in faith; you don't look as

if you could say nay to your lover; but what then? One way is as short as t'other. If you know one another's mind, what need of more words? I may fence to the day of Jerusalem; one hit is as good as an hundred, if it does but take place in the heart.

Capt. Wat. May I perish, squire, if you are not this moment in all England the very best fellow breathing.

Sq. Rob. I won't say that; all England's a wide place; but what then? I am a good fellow, I know that well enough: Never make no speeches to me; I'm downright, and afore the wind. They think I can't see the length of my nose, but I can spy more than they are aware of. Why, as if I didn't smoke old Di and the Doctor overhead; 'tis all the same game on that floor as you are playing on this, and I dare say it holds through from the kitchen to the garret.

Læt. Why, you are a wit, cousin Bob.

Sq. Rob. A wit am I? And if you was a wit too, how cou'd you help it? I'll tell you another thing, that perhaps you think I hadn't sense to find out—Old Di wants to put you and me together—Lord help you, that wou'd never do. What shou'd I make of all that frippery in the country? every hedge-stake would have a pluck at it: No, no; I must have a tight-truss'd thing, braced like a pudding-bag; a kind of road-tit, that can go over rough ground; those galloping fetlocks of yours wou'd hang cruelly in the soil; mercy on me, you'd be pull'd all to pieces, and done up in one season.

Læt. Well then, Robert, you and I will part by consent, and live good friends asunder for the rest of our lives. You shall have your Monmouthshire milk-maid of the true poney-stamp, and I will take my chance upon the smooth turf, which you seem to think is what I'm fittest for. Hush! here comes Mr Crotchet.

Enter JACK CROTCHET.

Jack. My dear friends, I snatch a moment to whisper one word in your ear.

Capt. Wat. Speak out; we are all in confidence.

Jack. This it is; if I augur rightly, you will not long have any occasion to bring your foils with you when you visit in this family; if I am not cross'd in my endeavours, a certain gentleman, who sent his card of compliments not long ago, will very soon be permitted to make his visit in person. Ask not by what means this is brought about; believe only that, where I profess a friendship, it is not for a small matter that I will break my word.

Capt. Wat. I dare say you are a man of honour, Mr Crotchet, and I shall act with you as such.

Jack. Trust me only, and you shall never be deceived: You too, my worthy pupil, you shall confess I am your friend: and as for you, Miss Rayner, if you do not very shortly find yourself set free from all restrictions, say I am no prophet.—This gentleman I would advise to beat his march immediately; and, that his person may not be noticed by the servants, I will let him out of the door.

Capt. Wat. I'll be gone this moment. Farewell!

Jack. Where shall I wait upon you? I must have a few minutes with you in private.

Capt. Wat. Here is my direction:—Hold though! Let me be sure I've given you the right ticket: these cards you know are liable to be mistaken. That's between you and me.

Jack. Well, well, it's all fair; I deserve that; but errors excepted, you know, is a salvo for all accounts, be they ever so honest.

(CAPT. WAT. *and* JACK *go one way;*
LÆTITIA *and the Squire another.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

LADY JANE *and* CAPT. WATERLAND.

Lady J. Well, Harry, what success with your fencing-master?

Capt. Wat. Beyond my hopes:—I fenced my way into the house; parried all difficulties, disarm'd aunt Di; laid the Box-lobby champion at my feet, and I flatter myself placed a gentle hit or two on the soft heart of my lovely Lætitia.

Lady J. But was it a hit, a *palpable hit*, as Ostrick says? If so, I pronounce that *the Lord Hamlet shall win.*

Capt. Wat. I will if I can; for, in faith, it will be a prize worth fighting for: I am all over wounds from head to heart, though she has only play'd her small artillery on me yet. I have a notable good second in cousin Bob, the young Grampus, and plenty of fair promises from the box-lobby quarter, but these I cannot swear for. Time will shew.

[GEORGE WATERLAND *looks in.*

Geo. Wat. May I come in?

Lady J. No, to be sure.

Geo. Wat. Your door says yes, for it is most invitingly open.

Lady J. Whose fault was that, Harry, yours or mine?

Capt. Wat. I scorn to make gentlemen jealous; it ruins the complexion; gives them a disorder in their eyes, and takes away the use of their limbs.

I have seen very bad effects from it:—A friend of mine was so totally crippled by a fit of jealousy, that he could not rise from his seat if the room had been in flames.

Geo. Wat. Then I'll venture to say he was most thoroughly in love.

Lady J. And probably with some good-for-nothing jilt, who was not worth the pains that he bestowed upon her.

Geo. Wat. Why should the fault be hers? The man perhaps thought humbly of himself, and trembled at the chance of her discovering superior merit in a rival. Now, if you had such a lover as this, Lady Jane, could you be very angry with him?

Lady J. Outrageously, and I would torment him most deliciously.

Geo. Wat. Could you find in your heart to do that?

Lady J. Oh yes, I have no mercy upon jealousy.

Geo. Wat. And how would you set about punishing him?

Lady J. Why, I would lay out for some such idle stray fellow as Harry here for instance, whom no woman in her senses can be serious about; and none but such a chit as Lætitia could be taken in by.

Capt. Wat. Do you hear her, brother George, do you hear her? If this does not prove that I am uppermost in her thoughts, what can prove it? And why does she abuse poor dear Lætitia, but because she can't endure to see me like any body but herself?

Geo. Wat. How come you then to trust your cause to an advocate so suspicious? Hadn't you better employ me, who am certainly interested to dispose of you? Send me to the lady of your heart, and let me plead in your behalf.

Capt. Wat. I bar that experiment.

Lady J. And I also.

Capt. Wat. Let me have no unmarried elder brother my counsel with Lætitia.

Lady J. And let not the man whom I would attach come within the sphere of her fascinating eyes.

Geo. Wat. Be just to yourself, Lady Jane, and you can never be suspicious of me.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Miss Rayner to wait upon your ladyship.

Lady J. Very well; shew Miss Rayner up.

[*Exit Servant.*

Come, come, gentlemen, I shall not let you stay here; go into that room, and wait till I come to you:—no wry faces, Harry, but be gone.

[*Exeunt* GEORGE *and* CAPT. WATERLAND.

LÆTITIA, LADY JANE.

Lady J. My dear Lætitia!

Læt. My dearest Lady Jane, aunt Di is grown so good-humoured, I have leave to come to you.

Lady J. I am glad to see you have survived your alarm at the theatre; but you will soon be able to fight your own battles, as I understand you are taking lectures in the noble science of defence.

Læt. Oh yes, I have an admirable master; he takes great pains with me.

Lady J. And you improve, I dare say, to his wishes; no doubt he is very fond of his disciple.

Læt. He flatters me by telling me so—And shall I believe him, Lady Jane? You have experience of the family, and can tell me if sincerity runs in the blood of them.

Lady J. There is, indeed, one of the *firme*, as the traders call it, whom I have had some transactions with, and find him a fair-dealing honest man: There is good property in the partnership, and I fancy you may trust the house: But what says your aunt to it? I rather suspect she wishes you to give your custom to her nephew.

Læt. Perhaps so, but his stock is small, and of a

fashion that does not suit my taste: I am released from that engagement, and she won't over-rule me in any other.

Lady J. Then suffer me to recommend a friend of mine, who waits with a throbbing heart behind that door, impatient to throw himself at your feet.

Læt. What do you mean? you startle me.

Lady J. Not much, I hope.

[*Goes into the room, and returns, presenting* CAPTAIN WATERLAND.

'Tis only your poor fencing-master.

[*Exit* LADY JANE.

CAPTAIN WATERLAND, LÆTITIA.

Læt. You take me by surprise—so great a master of his art shou'd scorn to attack a feeble fencer unprepared; I should have time at least to guard my heart.

Capt. Wat. I only come to fall before your feet, and beg for life.

Læt. Rise, rise, if you expect me to converse with you; I'll not listen to any thing you say upon your knees. If Lady Jane is always to keep you in her cabinet ready to sally forth, and fasten on a harmless creature, who is decoyed into her snare, have you the conscience to expect I will humour your vanity by repeating these visits, especially when my aunt has taken off the interdict, and opens her doors to Captain Waterland in common with every other man of fashion, who has a claim to visit her?

Capt. Wat. And may I visit her?

Læt. Why not?

Capt. Wat. But do you wish it?

Læt. What an insidious question!

Capt. Wat. I was excluded personally; what can have softened her heart?

Læt. Love, mollifying love. Our playhouse quarrel has been productive of wonderful events; one par-

ty is on the point of carrying off the aunt, and I dare say the other is in no bad train for carrying off the niece.

Capt. Wat. Alas! how very far am I from such presumptuous hopes, when all I sue for is not to be condemned to absolute despair?

Læt. Poor man! you have an advocate in Lady Jane; go to her, tell her how little she consults your interest by her absence; confess how very ill you manage your own cause, and how totally you despair of ever softening my hard heart without her help.

Capt. Wat. Not whilst that lovely smile encourages my hope will I resort to any advocate for help: With nothing else to recommend me but a heart and soul devoted to you, I throw myself upon your generosity without appeal, and by your sentence I will stand or fall.

Læt. But I'm not in the humour to pass sentence upon you just now: therefore we'll break up the court, and go to Lady Jane.

Capt. Wat. Will you be gone so soon?

Læt. Why not, since now there are no obstructions to our meeting? and if I was not sincere enough to own how welcome you will be to me, you wou'd be too sagacious not to discover that I play'd the hypocrite.

Capt. Wat. Then I am blest indeed: That confession has inspired me with such transports, that I dare not give them utterance, yet know not how to suppress them.

Læt. Then I'll teach you what to do with them—When a subject is too interesting, I drive it from my thoughts; when a lover is too agreeable, I run away from him—follow my example—but hold, hold!—Don't run the same way.

Capt. Wat. Can I help it? My heart is in your chains, and I must follow.

Læt. Oh! you simple man, this is making bad worse; fly to the other door if you mean to escape!

Capt. Wat. You wou'd despise me if I did.

Læt. Well, perhaps I shou'd—so come along with me to Lady Jane. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

DIANA GRAMPUS'S *House.*

JACK CROTCHET *is discovered reading a Parchment;* DIANA *standing by.*

Dia. Gram. Well, have you read it over?

Jack. I have.

Dia. Gram. Do you approve what it contains?

Jack. Your word had been as good.

Dia. Gram. My word indeed might well have passed betwixt you and me, but when relations, who are interested to keep me single, beset me with their importunity, this deed will be my answer. The obligation there to marry you under the penalty of ten thousand pounds will silence all opposers; and when they see that, with your free consent, I've made my nephew Robert heir to all my property, one poor annuity excepted of four hundred pounds a year to you at my decease, what can they do but own your conduct truly generous and disinterested?

Jack. Madam, I have my faults like ther men; you'll hear of them from many mouths that will open against me: you'll find them out yourself, but amongst them all, you never will discover me to be an interested, sordid, sneaking fellow.

Dia. Gram. I'll pledge my life you are not.

Jack. No, hang it, that's a character I hold in sove-

reign contempt. Covetousness has not even the credit of being the vice of a gentleman.

Dia. Gram. I dare be sworn you have no vice at all.

Jack. Don't risque that oath; you wou'd not like me half so well if I was all milk and honey. I hope you also have a little of the acid; how shall we else keep up the nuptial appetite unpall'd?

Dia. Gram. Come, come, you ramble.

Jack. I have a little turn for that to be sure, but then I'm always merry when I come home, and that makes up for every thing. The best thing I can say for myself is, that no man bears chiding with a better grace; tell me of my faults over and over again, rate and rattle at me ever so often, I am still the same, it makes no change in me.

Dia. Gram. Mr Crotchet, are you serious? Your style is really new to me, so very much unlike what you held in our first conversations, that you alarm me most exceedingly: Tell me what you are aiming at by this kind of discourse?

Jack. To let you into my character, and get a peep at yours: We have passed the stage of love, and there's no longer any call upon us to deceive each other.

Dia. Gram. Then I will tell you, sir, that my character is that which will neither put up with an insolent lover nor a libertine husband.

Jack. Right, nor can I bear a tame, civil, submissive wife; give me a woman of spirit: let her tongue be heard in the house: I love the high notes of the female voice, 'tis music to my ears—so now, my lovely dear betroth'd, adieu! I'll take the sacred scroll, that makes us one, and treasure it as your gift.—So! this is done, firm as the law can bind.

[*Puts it up, and exit.*

Dia. Grom. I'm petrified! I stand aghast at what I've done. He's changed, transform'd; no longer

like the man he was—no warmth, no gratitude, no fondness—not so much as a look—I thought to have seen him kneeling at my feet, gazing upon me with uplifted doting eyes, then starting up with rapture on the sudden, and enfolding me in his arms.—Oh Heavens! what ails me? am I alter'd? am I less pleasing, less alluring than I was? Now, brother what's the news with you?

Enter SIR TOBY GRAMPUS.

SIR TOBY GRAMPUS, DIANA.

Sir Tob. Damnable bad news for some of us—A famous kettle of fish you have made of it, sister Di, with this Jack Crotchet, as they call him. He a proper person to be pilot to a Grampus; zooks! he is not fit to be the porter of a scuttlefish.

Dia. Gram. What are you talking of? What are you bawling about? You make me mad, you turn my brain to hear your uncouth, unintelligible jargon. Speak English, if you've any thing to tell me, and let me understand you.

Sir Tob. Shou'd you understand me better then if I was to speak Welch? What the plague and the pestilence to boot! I must talk such language as I have. What is it you would be at? Am I not going to tell, if you had but patience?

Dia. Gram. Patience!—

Sir Tob. Why ay, there is not one of my name but myself that knows what patience means. You are a true Grampus, sister Di, let me tell you, every inch a Grampus.

Dia. Gram. Will you give me what you have to say in one word, or will you not?

Sir Tob. I cannot for the soul of me give it you in one word, but I can tell you in much fewer words than such a rascal deserves, that your fine fashion-

able fop of a tutor, your Jack Crotchet, is a pick-pocketly impostor, and, instead of being the son of William the Conqueror, and the devil knows who, is the spawn of a pillory-printer.

Dia. Gram. You have kill'd me. Call my servants —give me hartshorn, or I shall faint.

Sir Tob. What the vengeance should you faint for? I've more need of hartshorn, who have beat the hoof after him till I am as weary as a hound—There I went up a crinkum-crankum, cut-throatly alley out of Holborn, (hold there, it was not Holborn, it was St Giles's,) and what should I see in a shop-window but a book of travels through Italy and the Lord knows where, by Joseph Fulsome, Esquire. Oho! thought I, here's a book for Bob—so I cast my eye upon the board, and there I read, in dirty capitals—"John Crotchet, printer."

Dia. Gram. Why need you be so tedious, so circumstantial? Was this John Crotchet father to Mr Crotchet?

Sir Tob. To be sure he was; he told me so himself: I bought the book of him, his name is to the receipt: I went a few doors further; I turn'd into a barber's shop, (the best place you know for news,) and there inquired the character of Mr Crotchet—'It's a rule with me,' said the shaver, 'never to speak ill of my neighbours, especially of one who is my customer, but all the world knows neighbour Crotchet was pilloried, so there's no scandal in that.'

Dia. Gram. Stop your tongue, blundering, boisterous, unfeeling man as you are!

Sir Tob. Hey-day! what devil drives now?

Dia. Gram. Don't you see the condition I'm in?

Sir Tob. What condition are you in? By your talk I should guess you have been a little in the sun, as the saying is.

Dia. Gram. In the sun! say rather in the shade. —Oh! that eternal night would fall upon this fatal

hour, and shade it from my sight for ever! I am ruined and undone.

Sir Tob. The deuce you are! Hush it up, hush it up again, for the love of mercy.—If you and pillory Jack have been———

Dia. Gram. Worse, worse—I've married him.

Sir Tob. What! that's a settler, that's a knock-down blow. Good night to you! when you've thrown the stocking, truss yourself up in the garter. You'll have a notable batch of new relations. The pillory for your father-in-law, the whipping-post and stocks for your cousins, the gibbet for your husband, and a jointure in Botany Bay for yourself. I give you joy of your bargain.

Dia. Gram. Stop there, the fatal noose is not yet tied.

Sir Tob. But it soon will, and when he has stretch'd the rope, you will be what they call a Tyburn widow.

Dia. Gram. I tell you I am not wedded; I have but pledged my virgin vow.

Sir Tob. Then, good virgin, keep as you are; you have weathered it a good round time, even hold out to the end, and set the flesh at defiance.

Dia. Gram. Cease your licentious talk, and hear me:—I have given it on my bond to forfeit ten thousand pounds upon a breach of marriage, and he has the bond.

Sir Tob. Ten thousand devils fly away with it and him together!

Dia. Gram. That penalty excepted, all my property is settled hard and fast upon your son.

Sir Tob. Oh! is it so? Well, well, that's quite another case. Upon my soul, I'm afraid this alarm will be the death of you—you look vastly pale: Don't you feel as if you was a-going to faint? How it wou'd baulk the rascal if you was to go off suddenly!

Dia. Gram. Monster! wou'd you murder me to get my estate? Let him be what he will, he's not a

sordid, sneaking, worldly-minded hunks:—He's only a rake, and I'll reform him; he's only a rantipole young libertine, and I'll marry him in despite of you all. [*Exit.*

Sir Tob. Hell and confusion! she's only fit to be an out-pensioner of Bedlam.—Oh! are you here?

Enter SQUIRE ROBERT.

SQUIRE ROBERT, SIR TOBY.

Sir Tob. Bob, Bob! why Bob, I say!—How like a stock you stand; do you know what has happened? Have you heard the horrid news? Are you asleep, or drunk, or dead? D—mn you, for a dunce, what are you a-thinking of?

Sq. Rob. Nothing—Let my understanding rest.—What are you talking of?

Sir Tob. Why, of your aunt Di, to be sure.—She's ruin'd, ravish'd, murder'd, married, and gone to the devil.

Sq. Rob. Joy go with her.

Sir Tob. Married to your son of a bitch of a bear-leader.

Sq. Rob. Joy go with him, then! He has an arm full of it. It's no news to me, father; I cou'd have told you this an age ago.

Sir Tob. Why didn't you tell me, dunce, dolt?—Then I might have stopt her in time.

Sq. Rob. You wou'd, wou'd you? You'll stop the Thames next, I warrant. Laud, laud! how you fuss yourself about nothing.—Can't you let the old maid have her Crotchet, and say no more about it? [*Exit.*

Sir Tob. Was ever such an animal as my son! I suppose, if I had told him of her estate, he wou'dn't have cared for that either. Well, well, after all, there is something to comfort us. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

OLD CROTCHET'S *Office.*

CROTCHET, THEODOSIA, FULSOME.

Ful. So this is the way you treat me after all I have done for you—not print my treatise upon education, unless I pay you ready money for the paper!

Crot. Why should I give you my profit?

Ful. Why did I give you my interest with Di Grampus, and promote your son to an establishment which your utmost ambition could not have aspired to?

Crot. I had no ambition about it, never asked it of you—never wished it; my son, as you call him, is no son of mine.

Theo. Don't say that, Mr Crotchet; he is your own true son, and as like you as he can stare; and here he comes to prove my words.—Lord love you, Jacky, how pleased I am to see you!

Enter JACK.

Jack. How do, how do? How is it with you, Master Fulsome?

Ful. Master Fulsome!—I don't quite relish your familiarities, sir: some of them have not been altogether so agreeable. If you choose to take a beating over night, am I to be call'd out for it next morning? Who was that gentleman you gave my ticket to?

Jack. Harry Waterland, a particular friend of mine—I cou'dn't do you more honour than lay you in to his acquaintance.

Ful. Confer no such honour upon me, if you have any regard for yourself; recollect you are in my power; a word of mine blasts you beyond redemption.

Jack. Nobody's word has a happier faculty of blasting, I do confess; and if you have a fancy to try it upon me, and will run the risk of an airing in a blanket, you are heartily welcome.

Ful. I can bear this no longer; your insolence, and your father's ingratitude, shall meet a full reward; and you shall find to your sorrow, I can be as active an enemy as I have been a friend. [*Exit.*

Theo. Ah, Jack, Jack, will you never be wise? As sure as can be that spiteful man will go and betray you.

Jack. Very likely, let him go—Here, mother, I've a present for you; I think you took a fancy to my snuff-box—I'll give it to you.

Theo. Will you indeed, my dear? Why that is very kind: look, husband, look what a fine present he has made me.

Crot. You'll see it advertised in a day or two.

Jack. That's your opinion, is it? Keep yourself out of an advertisement as long, and you will do well. Cast your eye over this parchment, you'll find security for the snuff-box.

Theo. What is it, my dear? [*Gives him the deed.*

Jack. A trifle; some forty thousand pounds, with the incumbrance of a wife, or a neat ten with a clear acquittance: Now may I not set Fulsome at defiance?

Theo. But is it true, Jack? Is it hard and fast?

Crot. By the life of me, as firm as law can make it. What an unexpected stroke of fortune! 'Tis as if the sky rain'd gold:—How in the name of wonder did you persuade Di Grampus to this deed?

Jack. Dame Nature did the business; laid a train of combustibles in Diana's veins, and put the match in my hand that set fire to it.

Crot. Now do I repent from my heart that we provoked that spiteful fellow Fulsome, who will play us some dog's trick in revenge, and perhaps break off the match.

Jack. But he won't break off this seal from the bond; and as for old Di, take my word for it she'll not pay forfeit, but start the race, and run it through even to the last.—Ah! my little novelist!

Enter LINDAMIRA.

Theo. Oh Lindamira, I've such news to tell you.

Jack. Hush, mother, hold your tongue.

Theo. Such a piece of good fortune—your friend Jack is going to be married to Mrs Diana Grampus, with a monstrous fortune;—the wedding clothes are bought, the equipage bespoke, and there's the licence in Mr Crotchet's hand.

Crot. How your wits gallop!

Lin. Impossible, I never will believe it.

Jack. What a confounded blab you are!

Theo. Oh! I must have burst if I had not told it to Lindamira; besides I knew it would make her happy.

Lin. There you are out of your guess. [*Aside.*

Theo. Law, Lindy! what's the matter with you? you don't seem to rejoice with us.

Lin. The scene I have been employed upon, which is the catastrophe of my novel, dwells upon my mind; it is tragic in the deepest degree.—The faithless, perjured lover, after all his promises, forsakes the fond believing fair to wed with ugliness and age for sordid gold, and leaves her to expire with grief and disappointment.

Jack. Why will you write any thing so out of nature? no ladies die of grief?

Lin. And no gentlemen marry for money—that is your doctrine perhaps, but I am afraid examples of both are to be found, and will be found again; but, as the happy event is so near at hand, and you are engaged with parchments, I shall take my leave.

[*Exit.*

Jack. You've done it, mother: there is more mischief in that romantic girl's head, and more wit to

execute it, than in forty Fulsomes. Come, let us quit this public-room, and go up stairs; I've something to impart to you. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

A Room in DI GRAMPUS'S *House.*

SQUIRE ROBERT *meeting* JACK CROTCHET.

Sq. Rob. Fire and faggot! brother traveller, what a blaze have you lighted up in this house; there's old Di in such another taking—Zukers, how she does fume! A steam-engine is a fool to her. Never trust me if I cou'dn't have tugg'd that Fulsome by the ears, for the spiteful pains the thief took to put you out of favour with her; but keep a good heart, my brave fellow; and remember, when I have said the word, I have said it: I have given you my hand once, and here it is again: I am your friend—blow hot, blow cold, I never budge; one and the same for ever, that's my mark.

Jack. Squire Robert, you are a man after my own heart. I were a dog if I could look you in the face after this kindness, had I not proof positive in my pocket that I struck no bargain with your aunt till she had settled her whole fortune upon you by the

same article that she bound herself to marry me. There's a penalty of ten thousand pounds if she does not fulfil conditions; but if she flouts me because I am Jack Crotchet the printer's son, damme if I wou'dn't be set in the pillory, as my father was before me, rather than be tied up for life to a hyæna like her.

Sq. Rob. Why that's honest—Have you got it down in black and white?

Jack. Sign'd, seal'd, and witness'd—*ecce signum!* but here, you must take this bond.

Sq. Rob. I take it! What must I do with it?

Jack. Hold it safe, hard and fast; let nobody have it out of your hands; 'tis your own security: when I call for you to produce it, have it ready—that's all you have to do.

Sq. Rob. Never fear me—safe bind, safe find. There it is.—(*Puts it up.*)—Hollo! Stand fast—here comes the informer.

Enter FULSOME.

Jack. Hah! my friend Fulsome.

Ful. Hold there, I'm no friend of yours.

Jack. Yes, you are, and the best of friends. How kind is this visit; I am heartily glad to see you; pray be seated.

Ful. Vain, idle, thoughtless man, you are doing the honours of a house, that you will not be suffered to remain in five minutes longer.

Jack. You are merry, always merry and facetious no man's company more acceptable than Mr Fulsome's—fine address, ready genius, quick invention—only apt to enlarge a little in the recommendation of his friends.

Ful. I am very sorry that ever I did enlarge in your recommendation, sir; but I have taken shame to myself, and put Mrs Diana in possession of your real character.

Jack. I am glad of it, for then you disclosed your

own; all the world must applaud you for that amiable zeal, which never boggles at a good-natured lie when it is to serve a friend.

Ful. A lie do you call it, sir; a lie?

Jack. I beg your pardon—a transgression of the truth; a slip of memory; a trick of the traveller. Squire, let me present you to Mr Fulsome, an author of high renown; this is the worthy gentleman who told your aunt I was descended from an antient noble family, educated at the university, and deeply read in Greek and Latin, when all the world knows I am the son of a pillory printer, educated no where, and having learnt nothing:—if this gentleman is not a liar, who the deuce is?

Ful. If you call me a liar, sir, I shall treat you worse than your captain did.

Jack. Captain Waterland was in the right, and I begged his pardon; now you are in the wrong, and I'm your man whenever you can find spirit enough to call upon me.

Sq. Rob. That's well said, and I'm your second.—So, now, Mr Informer, name your weapons.

Ful. Weapons, sir, weapons? I,—I,—I don't fight duels—I accept no challenges; my pen is my weapon, and with that I know how to defend myself.

Sq. Rob. And stab your friend behind his back—that's your *way of fighting, is it?* then I've a great mind, sirrah, you shall have a taste of my way of fighting.

Jack. Let him alone; put him peaceably out of the house.

Sq. Rob. Here, Joe!

Enter JOE.

Joe. Your honour!

Sq. Rob. Turn this poltroon peaceably out of the house, and break his neck quietly down the stairs—the fellow's an informer.

Joe. Oh, the villain! Get along, you ugly toad: begone!

Ful. Keep the peace! You shall hear of this, be assured.

Sq. Rob. Damme! I'll have one kick before he goes. [*Exeunt all but* JACK.

Jack. Lindamira as I live—Now we shall have heroic passion in prose run mad.

(*Sits down to a table, and takes up a newspaper.*

LINDAMIRA, JACK CROTCHET.

Lin. Have I found you, base, perfidious monster? Tremble, wretch, at the effects of my revenge, and learn too late how dreadful it is to awake the rage of her who loved and was betray'd. Do you not hear me? Do you not regard me? What, is this feign'd insensibility? Cool deliberate villain, quit this nonsense, and attend to me. (*Snatches the paper.*

Jack. Come, come, Lindamira, give me the paper; I was in the midst of a very interesting paragraph.

Lin. I'll ve you news, if that is what you thirst for, news to rike you dumb—you are ruin'd, and by me.

Jack. How so, my dear?

Lin. I've blasted all your hopes, drawn you in shades black as your own perfidy, and held the horrid likeness up before the eyes of your astonished bride, that would have been, but never will be now.

Jack. Oh! you've been with the lady up stairs, have you?

Lin. I have, and glory in a just revenge; I have inspired her bosom with the rage that boils in mine.

Jack. You have done admirably well for me, but very ill for yourself, Lindamira. If the angry dame declares off, she pays the penalty, and I have ten thousand pounds in my pocket to marry as I like.

Lin. How! what? She forfeits ten thousand pounds if she does not marry you?—

Jack. Exactly so, and you have put her in the very humour to pay the bond.

Lin. How, then, is that ill for myself if you are set free?

Jack. Because, my darling, I shou'd have laid it and your admirer at your lovely feet.

Lin. And what shou'd hinder you?

Jack. My conscience: Taking your word for truth, that I am a base perfidious monster, a cool deliberate villain, I really have not the face to approach so pure a being as you; your virtues awe me: I'll retire to some sequestered cell, there practise fasting and repentance, and every morning for a penance read my Lindamira's novel, till, by frequent meditation on your beautiful descriptions, I fall in love with purling streams and flowery meads, and think no more of love and women.

Lin. Did you not deceive me, cruel man? Did you not use me basely? Answer that!

Jack. We were poor Lindamira: You had only a novel for your fortune, and I nothing but my good spirits to support me: you would not trust to my honour, but, catching at the very first word blabb'd out by a silly gossip, started forth on your high horse of heroics, and meant to crush me at once in the true tragedy style of blank verse and revenge.—There's your answer, Lindamira; now, if you talk till to-morrow, I won't utter a syllable more. (*Sits down.*

Lin. Wretched, wretched Lindamira! undone by my own rash romantic folly. Oh! what had I to do with revenge? Detested passion, live only in a novel henceforward among the wealthy and the great, thou art not fit for common life, and common folks like me! [*Exit.*

SIR TOBY GRAMPUS, JACK.

Sir Tob. Your humble servant, learned sir, your very humble servant! I found a certain printer in an obscure dirty lane, who writes John Crotchet on his shop-board, and boasts himself to be your honour'd father: I ask'd to be favour'd with a sight of his illustrious pedigree from the antient Saxons of the heptarchy, but he declared it was not in his power to furnish me with any lights into the records of his family, farther than, as he really believed, he had a father and a mother; but even that, he said, was matter of faith, not of certainty.

Jack. Sir Toby Grampus, we that cannot count up our generations have oftentimes the sense to outwit you, whose ancestors hang by the wall from Hildebrand, the great Grampus in King Arthur's day, down to little Toby the sprat, in good King George's, God bless him! One of your forefathers perhaps cou'd eat a whole venison pasty for his breakfast; another cou'd bend a kitchen-poker across his arm, a third might keep hawks and greyhounds: what are they but a catalogue of insignificants? One printer, one compositor, one poor corrector of the press, is worth them all, and his country gains more credit by his labours.

Sir Tob. 'Fore George, my friend, I'm not sure but you are in the right of it; I know little of my forefathers, but that they lived on the same spot for many generations, and left me a fair estate to follow the same practice—Sir, I begin to perceive you are a very clever fellow, and if sister Di is of the same opinion, I believe a little printer's ink mix'd with our blood wou'd do the family no harm. [*Exit.*

As JACK *is going out,* DIANA *enters.*

DIANA, JACK,

Dia. Gram. Stop, sir, a word with you if you please! Whither are you going so dress'd out?

Jack. To pass an hour at Ranelagh, to beat the round in search of some kind humble girl, who will consent to take up with a printer's son, that has ten thousand pounds in his pocket, and an honest heart in his bosom. I find I am sentenced to dismission from your favour.

Dia. Gram. Who tells you so?—Hang the fellow, how agreeable he is!

Jack. Those who told you how little I deserve you —Fulsome and Lindamira.

Dia. Gram. Can you refute their evidence?

Jack. I sha'n't attempt it; I rather think they have not told you half my faults and failings.

Dia. Gram. That's sincere. however.—He is really a fine figure.—Knowing yourself thus undeserving, as you say you are, why did you strive to make me like you?

Jack. Because I liked you—I hope that's a natural reason.

Dia. Gram. Humph! there's a strange mixture in your character, my friend, of good and bad, honesty and deceit, reason and rhodomontade.

Jack. Yes, madam, I am an odd unsettled fellow, made up of contraries, and 'tis a mere chance which way the tide turns me: good sense and good humour in a wife wou'd guide me to happiness; a fool or a shrew wou'd shipwreck me and herself. And now, madam, with your permission, I will take my leave; having pleaded guilty, I anticipate your sentence.

Dia. Gram. Stop, sir, perhaps my heart is not so hard as you suppose; you said you liked me once; is your mind alter'd since?

Jack. I do not like your listening to informers; I cannot parry stabs behind my back. I ought to have been present.

Dia. Gram. Be present then; put off your jaunt to Ranelagh; I'll call my friends together, and you shall then be heard.

Jack. Agreed! till then farewell. [*Exit.*

Dia. Gram. Well, go your ways, you are a dear, false, fascinating rogue, and I know not what to do with you, or without you. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

LADY JANE DANVERS' *House.*

LADY JANE, CAPT. WATERLAND, LÆTITIA.

Læt. Well, if ever I met with such a man in my life! Lady Jane, I'll be judged by you if I ought to believe one single word that he says, or rather that he swears, for he does nothing else.

Lady J. Give him a short answer, and send him away, if he's troublesome.

Læt. And so I will: what business has he to be talking to me about love? I never gave him any encouragement.

Lady J. To be sure you did not. Your behaviour to him at the play, your letter about him to me, your treatment of him at your aunt's, all were clear proofs what you thought of him; but some men, and he is one, never will take an answer.

Capt. Wat. Oh thou sweet, enchanting, lovely creature! every sense is lost in rapture while I gaze upon thee.

Læt. There now he has lost his senses—Do hold your tongue; I won't be talk'd to in this way; I protest I'll tell my aunt of you. Do you think I'll have any thing to say to a fencing-master? I declare, Lady Jane, I'm in the humour to take your advice, and give him his answer once for all.

Lady J. By all means, Lætitia; a quick riddance of a troublesome companion is the best.

Læt. Then I will do it: but first tell me, sir, how long, in honour and conscience, you expect to live after I have given you a peremptory refusal?—Now mind what he'll say.

Capt. Wat. Not an hour, not a moment: it would be death upon the instant.

Læt. Look you there; now he's going to die, and fix the odium upon me; but I'll not have his life to answer for:—I'll not rob his friends of what they value, his country of what defends it, the world of what it admires, no, nor my own heart of what it loves and esteems—so there's my hand!—Now, dear Lady Jane, hold him down, and don't let him be romping and rioting about in this boisterous manner, for I won't bear it.—Look, look, he's coming on.—Help, help, I'll raise the family— [*He embraces her.*

Lady J. There, there! I shall have a scandal brought upon my house.

Enter GEORGE WATERLAND.

Oh! these lovers, these lovers! Mr Waterland, what shall we do with them?

Geo. Wat. Copy their example, if I dare tell you what I wish.

Lady J. Fie upon you! do you hear him, Lætitia? They are both in a league against us, and we good-natured simple souls have thrown away our game by playing into their hands.

Læt. We are too good to them by half; kindness

does but spoil them. Oh! that I had studied the dear art of tormenting in good time!

Capt. Wat. Upon my life, George, these ladies do not do us justice, threat'ning us with the torture, when we have both behaved to admiration: Considering how much they have bless'd us, we ought at this moment to be gratefully out of our senses.

Geo. Wat. For my part I disclaim all responsibility, for I move but as the mistress of my soul directs; in her hand are all those springs, that give it joy or sorrow, health or sickness, life or death.

Lady J. Well, my dear Lætitia, I know not what else we can do but make a common cause, and hold lovingly together, as friends and sisters should.

Capt. Wat. As sisters, lovely Lætitia—do you mark that?

Læt. Certainly; I mark nothing else: The honour of calling Lady Jane my sister will be a consolation under all my sufferings. But first let me have a specimen of your dutiful behaviour to your aunt Di—I take upon me to invite this good company into counsel upon the grand matter in immediate debate.

Geo. Wat. What is the question?

Læt. To wed, or not to wed,—that is the question—lose no time; for, as I take it, we are all just now in the cue to vote for the affirmative.

Lady J. Delicious! aunt Di struck by the arrows of blind Cupid, and our Box-lobby friend the happy man.

Læt. Even so—

"The happy bridegroom he, and she the blooming bride."

Geo. Wat. But shall we be welcome after all?

Læt. I'll engage for that.—Let us set off, we shall just fill the coach. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

DIANA GRAMPUS *alone.*

Was ever woman so perplex'd, distracted and distress'd? I cannot state a reason for rejecting this young man, but one starts up to reconcile me to him: no sooner do I lean to mercy, but my pride cries out for vengeance; if love pleads to marry him, prudence whispers me to let it alone: well, well, but what signifies her whisper, when love has all the talk to himself? I'll fairly put the pro's and con's for the last time, and let the strongest carry it.—He's a beggar: granted; that I knew from the first:—he's a low-born fellow, that I did not know, and that's a staggering circumstance—but who's to find it out? He's airy, gay, genteel, well-dress'd: what has the world to do with pedigrees?—He's ignorant, unlearned, and uneducated—be it so! He's not pedantic, therefore not conceited, crabbed, a mere book-worm; won't dispute authorities with me, nor wrangle in theology and metaphysics, where the walk will be my own. He is, he is—hush, in short he is here, and all objections vanish.

Enter JACK.

JACK CROTCHET, DIANA GRAMPUS.

Jack. Most perfect of your sex—your criminal presents himself for judgment; try me with candour, but decide with justice. I pray call your counsel into court.

Enter GEORGE WATERLAND, CAPT. WATERLAND, LADY JANE DANVERS, SIR TOBY GRAMPUS, SQUIRE ROBERT, *and* LÆTITIA.

Dia. Gram. Brother and nephew, and you, my dear Lætitia, and this your kind and noble friend, are welcome; these gentlemen also, your second selves, are welcome: they, I know, are parties, that can judge in cases of the heart: they are also honourable men, to whom I need not blush to make my weakness known, for I confess it is a weakness that has brought me into this dilemma, and constrained me to appeal to you, my friends, for counsel and advice.

Geo. Wat. Madam, we come with honest hearts to serve you; not with base design to expose and publish what we hear; we hold for sacred all that you confide to us.

Capt. Wat. Here is my pledge, and of your own bestowing: I were a wretch too base to breathe, cou'd I betray you.

Sq. Rob. And here am I, your nephew, more beholden to you than all; but when I see this man alone without a friend, I'll risk your anger, and turn over to the weakest side. Now come on as soon as you please.

Geo. Wat. By heavens! a noble fellow.

Sir Tob. Bob, Bob! are you wise?

Sq. Rob. No, father, but I'm honest.

Dia. Gram. Now, sir, be pleased to answer to a few plain questions:—you came into this family recommended to me as a gentleman every way qualified to direct the education of my nephew: I received you, approved of you, was pleased with you, your manners, your appearance, your address engaged me; my partiality for you went great lengths; regarding you as the descendant of a noble family, I pitied you, nay more, with blushes I confess I loved you Are you the well-born gentleman that I was taught to believe you?

Jack. I am not.

Sq. Rob. That's an answer.

Dia. Gram. Are you the man of literature—the scholar?

Jack. Nothing less.

Sq. Rob. So far, so good.

Dia. Gram. What sort of education had you?

Jack. None: you took that on the word of Fulsome; let him appear and answer for himself.

Sq. Rob. He'll hardly do that; I kick'd him out of the house this morning.

Capt. Wat. Bravo! little Monmouthshire, I adore your spirit.

Dia. Gram. You are the son of a printer.

Jack. I am; many respectable men are of that calling; I don't say my father is one of them, but such as he is, he shall appear: come in, if you please.

Enter OLD CROTCHET.

Dia. Gram. Your name is Crotchet?

Crot. John Crotchet is my name, and this is my son; if you have any commands in my way, I shall be proud to serve you: I believe that gentleman was in my shop this morning.

Sir Tob. I was so: I purchased two books of you.

Crot. Fulsome's Travels; I believe you never had more lies for your money.

Dia. Gram. We'll proceed, if you please—Did you not promise marriage to a certain girl named Lindamira?

Jack. She told you so; I have been in search of her, but cannot find her.

Crot. I don't know how you shou'd: for she has run off with that scoundrel Fulsome, both in my debt: It is not a first time I have suffered by that fellow: It is a printer's honour not to give up his principal—the rascal was the author of a libel, for which I stood the pelting.

Sq. Rob. Oh, that I had known it! I wou'd have given him t'other kick for that.

Jack. Now, madam, you have pretty nearly the sum total of my crimes: If every man was sifted so minutely, few wou'd escape uncensured. You favoured me with your regards, and unsolicited proposed to marry me on terms, that my conscience, bad as you may think me, revolted from: I stipulated for your rightful heir, your nephew—accepting for myself a small annuity.

Sir Tob. A very noble action, let me tell you.

Jack. I influenced you to give your niece the freedom of her choice; you generously complied; a worthy gentleman has cause to bless you for the deed.

Capt. Wat. Oh Heavens! I must embrace this man.

Jack. I suffer'd you to force a bond upon me, by which you guaranteed your marriage on the penalty of ten thousand pounds. I did not think you likely to incur the forfeiture, and therefore disregarded the amount: Now, madam, though I am not worth a doit, I have a spirit that disdains to punish any lady who repents of having liked me—Your nephew has the bond—I never shall enforce it.

Crot. The fellow's a fool.

Sq. Rob. Here, here it is, aunt Di. Now who says Jack Crotchet is not a noble fellow?

Dia. Gram. This act indeed is noble.

Geo. Wat. I must be known to him.—Sir, give me leave to take you by the hand. Whilst I am living, you shall never want a friend.

Capt. Wat. You are the author of my happiness, my benefactor.

Jack. I hope that lady can forgive my rudeness at the play.

Læt. I bless the hour we met.

Lady J. Madam, there is but one voice amongst us, and that to give you joy.

Sir Tob. She'll marry him, I know she'll marry him. Come, come, a general reconciliation.

Sq. Tob. Ay, ay, you're all come over to my side at last.

Dia. Gram. I am convinced. And now, if these fair brides will join their lovers' hands as cordially as I do mine, Hymen will never welcome a more happy group.

Sq. Rob. They'll do't, they'll do't! huzza! we are all in the way to be married.

Lady J. With heart and hand I join.

(*Taking* GEORGE'S *hand.*

Læt. And I with hand and heart.

(*Taking* CAPT. WATERLAND'S *hand.*

Jack. And I with both my hands, and all the hearts I have—A heart to honour you, a heart to serve you, and a heart to love you:—When you're sad I'll make you merry; when you're sick I'll make you well.—With all my worldly possessions I endow you; with all my learning I celebrate you; with all my titles I ennoble you:—One reserve only I keep to myself, gratitude for your favours, and zeal to merit the protection of this candid audience. [*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

NATURAL SON;

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

BY

RICHARD CUMBERLAND, Esq.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Sir Jeffery Latimer,	*Mr Baddeley.*
Blushenly,	*Mr Palmer,*
Ruefull,	*Mr Bensley.*
Jack Hustings,	*Mr King.*
Major O'Flaherty,	*Mr Moody.*
Dumps,	*Mr Parsons.*
David,	*Mr Wrighten.*
Mrs Phœbe Latimer,	*Mis\ Pope.*
Lady Paragon,	*Miss Farren.*
Penelope,	*Miss Tidswell.*

Servants, &c.

Time, *that of the Representation.*

SCENE,—Sir Jeffery's Country House.

THE

NATURAL SON.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

A Library. MRS PHŒBE LATIMER *discovered at a Table with Books, reading.*

Enter PENELOPE, *after gently tapping at the door.*

Phœ. Who's there? Come in, Mrs Penelope!—Come in without ceremony.

Pen. I beg pardon for disturbing you, madam; but my lady ordered me to bring her a book out of the library.

Phœ. What book does Lady Paragon wish to have?

Pen. Any that comes first to hand, French or English.

Phœ. Is she fond of reading poems?

Pen. If they are moving.

Phœ. A lady's productions, I doubt, are not so apt to move, else I should recommend this collection.

Pen. A lady write poems! I wonder any lady wil do such a thing, 'tis sure destruction to the complexion.—Doctor Calomel says, a lady, to preserve her beauty, should not even think; he has wrote a book purposely to dissuade people from reading.

Phœ. Every book he writes will do that. So far however I subscribe to his maxims, as cautiously to engage in any work of intense hot thinking, lest the fire of the imagination should force its way into the face, and the flag of the rose be made to predominate over the wreck of the lily.

Pen. Then, as sure as can be, that's my Lady Paragon's reason for employing Mr Blushenly to read to her.

Phœ. So, so! she employs him, does she?

Pen. Oh yes, ma'am, Mr Bushenly sits with my lady, and reads to her by the hour.

Phœ. Humph! then depend upon it 'tis not to save her eyes that she employs Mr Blushenly; I rather think it is to satisfy them.

Pen. Mr Blushenly is a very handsome man, to be sure.

Phœ. You think so; and you are generally of your lady's way of thinking, are you not?

Pen. 'Twould be no disparagement to my taste, if I were.

Phœ. On the contrary, Mrs Penelope, your lady and my niece is a professed admirer of beauty, so great a one, that she admires even herself; she may like to gratify her ears as well as her eyes by employing Mr Blushenly: so, now that we have accounted for two of her five senses in the interest of the reader, we need not seek for other reasons, Mrs Penelope, why you should carry this book to the lady, and why I should intercept the gentleman from following it.

Pen. A malicious thing! she's in love with him herself. (*Aside, and exit.*

Phœ. These confidential *commies* of the toilet are sure to talk the language of their principals. Not that I suspect my niece of an attachment—that's not her passion; vanity and variety is her game. Then the condition of poor Blushenly keeps him back; dependant, a foundling, destitute of every thing but what the Graces have bestowed; Nature his only parent, Charity his nurse, and the wide world his inheritance.

Enter BLUSHENLY, *and bows.*

Mr Blushenly, good day to you!

Blush. Your most obedient, Mrs Phœbe; always amongst your books! ever at the toilet of the Muses!

Phœ. Yes, Mr Blushenly, my beauty-wash is cull'd from the blossoms of Parnassus; Truth holds the glass, Nature gives the grace. The mind, the mind, Mr Blushenly, must be clothed, and here is its wardrobe; 'tis with that we attract the regards of the man of sense, with that we hold commerce with the worthy: misconstrue not my expression; the soul, young gentleman, the soul is of no sex.

Blush. I am sorry for it, Mrs Phœbe; for I have been apt to think all its softer attributes were of your department. Admit your doctrine to be true, and what becomes of the good old proverb, 'Love begets love,' if there be no sex in the question?

Phœ. I like your proverb, I admit your proverb, I admit it in its full force, Mr Blushenly: there is not a postulatum in philosophy I had not rather give up, than have you think for a moment that these tender attentions can be bestowed upon an unthankful heart.

Blush. Oh the vengeance! what is coming now? (*Aside.*

Phœ. They are not lost, believe me; not a tear that springs in your eye, not a sigh that escapes

from your breast, but generates in mine a congenial affection.—I appeal to what pass'd last night whilst I was at the harpsichord: you may remember the cantata was Parthenia's encouraging address to her bashful lover: I noticed the looks you gave me whilst I was singing; I felt them, you might perceive I did: they gave a meaning, an expression to the cadence: it might not reach, perhaps, to barbarous ears, but I am persuaded, Mr Blushenly, it came home to your's.

Blush. The ears, madam, are the most dangerous avenues to the heart; your sex, as well as mine, have found them such to their cost.

Phœ. The human voice, Mr Blushenly, was not bestowed as the mere organ of speech, but as the oral index of the soul.—You have a sweet voice, Mr Blushenly; and what a recreation to my ears, after being tortured with the crack'd, untuneable trumpet of my brother, Sir Jeffery Latimer, the hoarse hunting-horn of Jack Hustings, and the quarter sessions yell of our neighbouring country squires, to hear you speak!—Thanks be to the times! these indigenous barbarians are in the way to be exterminated by taxes, as the Indian savages have been by rum.

Blush. Upon my word, Mrs Phœbe, your partiality puts me to the blush.

Phœ. And it becomes you; blushing becomes you! not that I approve of diffidence in excess, the least resemblance of despair: no, on the contrary, I would encourage hope, I would cherish even ambition. There is one in this family, Mr Blushenly, warmly impressed in your favour: let not distance of condition, nor the inscrutable mysteriousness of your birth, put you out of heart; you have qualities that can counterbalance fortune; and you have a friend at hand, who bears you much good-will, more than you are aware of; more than it becomes her to ex-

press—more, perhaps, than she can express—Oh! I shall blush to death!

Enter LADY PARAGON, *reading*.

Lady P. 'O'er her soft cheek consenting blushes move,
And with kind stealth her secret soul betray;
Blushes, which usher in the morn of love,
Sure as the redd'ning east foretels the day.'
AIKIN.

—Thank you for your female poet! thus we women write.—Blushenly, have you aired my lap-dog? that's all you men are fit for.

Phœ. How long has Lady Paragon been of that opinion?—Vexatious and perverse! (*Aside.*

Lady P. Her ladyship has been of that opinion long enough to change it—half an hour.

Phœ. I thought it would not be your lasting creed.

Lady P. Ah, no, no, no! Woman's a riddle, my good aunt, and so is love; to love, and be a woman, that's not well; to be a woman, and not love, that's worse.—Here, Blushenly, put this book in your pocket, and come and read to me whilst I dress myself.

Phœ. Lady Paragon, are you aware of what you say?

Lady P. Not always; but I think I bade him come and read to me whilst I am at my toilet; by which means I divide my attentions between mind and body, and keep peace with both parties: out of two offices I think I have civilly offered him the best.—She's in a horrid humour. (*Aside.*

Phœ. Well, niece, these may be modern manners: for my own part, I should think you have already bestowed pains enough upon your person for one day.

Lady P. True; but I dress and undress myself as a child does her doll, for amusement.

Phœ. And do you invite young gentlemen to be present on these occasions, for amusement too?

Lady P. No, I do it for his good: when he shall see what frippery a woman is made up with, what a pasticcio of gauzes, pins, and ribbons, go to compound that multifarious thing a well-dress'd woman; why then—why then—what was I going to say?—he'll find that modern beauty is but haberdashers' ware; and if he ever had any gallantry, (which I very much doubt,) he'll be cured of it at once, and you may lead him up and down the house like a tame philosopher.—Isn't it so, Blushenly?

Blush. I hope I shall never forget myself, when I approach your ladyship or Miss Phœbe

Lady P. Look you there, now; didn't I tell you he was fit for nothing but to air a lady's lap-dog?

Blush. I perceive you are in one of your rallying humours, and want to be rid of me.

Lady P. Not I, upon my life!—part not in that opinion: I talk nonsense only to drive away spleen; be assured I never was in a more melancholy mood in my life.

Phœ. I am sorry, niece Paragon, your father's family is so dull to you.

Lady P. Misconceive me not: I have every thing I want but one, and without that I starve in the midst of plenty.

Phœ. And what is that one thing wanting, pray now?

Lady P. Flattery: simply the food of flattery; not a full meal, that is nauseating, but evermore a little relish now and then: truth is the daily bread, the staff of life, flattery the salt.—As for this moping, mortifying thing, I can make nothing of him; a way-post has more conversation.—'I hope I shall never forget myself, when I approach your ladyship or Miss Phœbe.'—Oh, you unaccountable creature!

may I be further, if he has said one flattering thing to me since in the house I have been.

Blush. Nor ever shall attempt it: fine men may make fine speeches; a flattering beggar only shews his mind is as mean as his condition.

Lady P. Nay, if you talk sentiment to me, Blushenly, you'll set me a-crying; hands off from that edged tool, if you love me. Sentiment in the country is clear another thing from sentiment in town: in my box at the opera I can take it as glibly as a dish of tea, down it goes, and there's an end of it; but in walks of willows, and by the side of rivulets, there's no joke in it I'm undone if I hear it by moon-light.—Of all things in the creation, I hate pity.

Phœ. Did I ever hear the like? Pity is the characteristic of our sex.

Blush. Right, madam, it is the sister of Love.

Lady P. Well, and if it is, because I take one of the family, is that a reason I should maintain all the relations?—Heaven defend me from pitying any thing above a lap-dog or a monkey!

Phœ. Oh, for a shame! Would you throw that away upon a brute, which is due to your fellow-creatures?—Believe me, Mr Blushenly, I have a heart for pity, and your misfortunes have a share in it.

Lady P O lud, lud, lud! I would not pity him for the world; I would not do him such an injury; for as sure as can be, if I pitied I should love him; and if I loved him, all the world would pity him.

Blush. Envy him, you should have said: how any man beloved by Lady Paragon can be an object of pity, is a mystery past my finding out.

Lady P. That may well be, and no great mystery neither; as for my lovers, they are in general the merriest, gayest creatures in nature; for, as I seldom take a liking to any of them, I seldom tor-

ment 'em; but if ever that happens, woe betide 'em! no cat ever tortured a mouse as I persecute the poor, dear, miserable creatures.—So, now you are fairly warn'd, Blushenly; and if you run into a trap, you run with your eyes open. (LADY PARAGON *is going, and stops at the door.*) Well, I'm going—If you are discreet you will not go with me—but if you are determined to venture, here lies your way. —What say you? Will you venture?—Aunt Phœbe, your servant. (*Exit.*

Phœ. Mr Blushenly, let me advise you—you see what a fantastical thing it is—I have something to impart to you.—Nay, if you are resolved—go—I renounce you—I commit you to your folly.—Oh! I could tear out her eyes! I am betrayed, abused, insulted.

(BLUSHENLY, *during these speeches, stands silent, and in apparent suspense; at length, hastily escapes, and follows* LADY PARAGON.

Enter SIR JEFFERY LATIMER.

You have a notable wise head of your own, have you not?—Cackling like an old gander with but one gosling to your back, and then to set that fox, dropt in a bag at your door, to keep it.

Sir Jef. Why, what the plague's the meaning of all this?

Phœ. The meaning is, that, not content with what Nature did for you, you will be a fool of your own making.—The meaning is, that you have reared, educated, father'd this *Terræ-filius* to bring heirs to the Latimers, children of nobody, and grandchildren without a name.

Sir Jef. What would you have me do in the matter?

Phœ. Send a herald to the moon, from whence he dropt, and search the office there, before you let

this foundling quarter arms with a family as ancient as the monarchy.

Sir Jef. Here's an outcry about nothing!—Look out, and satisfy yourself. There they are in the garden, innocently plucking a little fruit.

Phœ. Yes, o' my conscience, the forbidden fruit—But I'll not look out; I cann't endure to see them: your daughter's danger brings the tears into my eyes.

Sir Jef. I believe you are in most danger of the two yourself.—Never tell me! 'tis all rank jealousy.

Phœ. Rank folly, Jeffery Latimer!—But I will be more moderate.—Why did you call him home from the university?—Why did you send him thither?—I'll argue calmly with you—Is it not enough that she has made one unhappy match?

Sir Jef. Yes: but I doubt that match was of our making, sister Phœbe.—Let her choose next for herself, and she will have nobody but herself to complain of.

Phœ. Fine arguing!—Brother, brother, you are *ignoramus*, or, as the poet sings—

Sir Jef. Damn the poet!

Phœ. Oaths are no arguments, Jeffery Latimer; mere *brutum fulmen*, as the logicians have it.

Sir Jef. Damn the logicians!

Phœ. Now I am cool, you are hot!—How often, brother Latimer, have I talked to you on the subject of passion? Have not I told you that the wise ancients call anger a short madness? You had best abuse them too, had you not?

Sir Jef. No, no, not in your company; I have too much manners to abuse the ancients to their faces.

Phœ. You have no manners, Jeffery Latimer; no one component particle of a gentleman about you, but the pedigree of one; then you swear and talk so loud, and have contracted such a yell at turnpike

meetings and election ordinaries, that, I protest to you, if I did not see you be-perriwigg'd with the mane of a lion, I should think by your braying I was in company with an ass.

Sir Jef. I wish I had the patience of an ass.—Talk of my perriwig indeed! look at your own.—What are all those flags and streamers but Cupid's artillery in ambuscade? Men-traps and marriage-guns in every curl.

Phœ. Don't be gross, Jeffery Latimer, don't be gross.—I'll not be made the butt of your ribaldry, nor the dupe of your avarice; I'll take my fortune into my own hands, and not leave it as a nest-egg to hatch cuckoos of another feather than my own. You are a barren bird, brother Jeffery; your line is run out, and you are the worm at the end of it; you are the last of the Latimers, an evanescent quantity, as the schoolmen express it: you stand at the foot of a noble pedigree, like a brass farthing in a collection of rich medals.

Sir Jef. And what will you do for my pedigree?—A second deluge cannot stop it more effectually.

Phœ. I'll tell you what I'll do—live to my own liking: I've sacrificed the morning of my day to your humours, noon and evening I'll dedicate to my own. (*Exit.*

Sir Jef. 'Fore Heaven you make a long day of it, if it's only noon with you yet!—Well, David, what's the best news with you?

Enter DAVID.

Dav. An' please your worship, Mr Hustings is come to dine with you.

Sir Jef. My honest friend, Jack Hustings! where is he?

Dav. In the steward's parlour, putting the fowling-pieces in order: he has brought a brace of trout

of his own hooking, would do your heart good to see them.

Sir Jef. That's well, that's well! fly-fishing is in season, and then my friend Jack never comes empty-handed. But I must have a word in private with you—shut the door. You and I, David, have kept this secret of young Blushenly, as we call him, now these twenty years and upwards; the neighbours think him a bye-brat of my own (for the old story of a foundling dropt at my door gets no credit with them,) and the education I have given him, which has been such in all points as I would have given my own son, strengthens their suspicions: in all this time my cousin Frances Latimer, though she has liberally maintain'd him in secret, has never seen him.

Dav. And if report says true, she is likely to go out of the world without it.

Sir Jef. So she does but acknowledge him at her death, be it so! My last letters out of Flanders left her in a very dangerous way.—How long ago is it, David, since my daughter's husband, Lord Paragon, died?

Dav. A year and a half to a day, next Lammas.

Sir Jef. 'Twas a happy riddance: and what the world would think a misfortune (that she had no children by him,) I account a blessing; for I would fain have a grandson of my own name and family to inherit my estate.

Dav. I thought your worship was coming to that point; there is no male living of the name of Latimer, unless you call Mr Blushenly so, in right of his mother.

Sir Jef. And what is he but a Latimer? Why have I brought him and Lady Paragon together, think you, but in this very hope?—I have the pleasure to see their attachment advance every hour.

Dav. I can readily believe it; and a lovely couple they will be as the sun ever saw; a fine gentleman he

is, and a kind-hearted and a handsome; no flouter nor fleerer at poor folks, but always humble and obliging: all the neighbours love him, all the poor bless him; and, for my own part—but I say little; it does not become a servant to be prating—I ask your worship's pardon for my boldness.

Sir Jef. David, you have no need to ask pardon; I consider you as a friend rather than a servant—but we'll talk of this at our leisure——Get you gone for the present: I hear Jack Hustings at the door.

[*Exit* DAVID.

Enter JACK HUSTINGS.

Ah, Jack! how runs the world with thee?

Jack. Rubs as it runs. How is it, knight?—Give me thy fore-finger. I am come to rumple a napkin with thee.

Sir Jef. And thou shalt be as welcome, my good friend, as to-day and to-morrow into the bargain.

Jack I know it, I know it well, else I would not come.—I have brought thee a brace of trout, knight; they are the first I've taken this season, and I'll warrant 'em as pink as a petticoat:—shew'd noble play, up the stream and down the stream:—a cloud in the sky, a ripple on the water;—here stood I: you know my old watch; snap's the word—never miss my throw. —Hast got a good breed of birds on thy manor this season?

Sir Jef. Tolerable, tolerable, a pretty fairish parcel.

Jack. So much the better; I'll come and brush the stubbles for thee in a week or two's time. I have been putting your fowling-pieces in order, for your armoury was in sad trim.—How does my dainty little widow and fair Phœbe?—I've a little matter of business for thee, if I can bring it out.

Sir Jef. What's the matter now, Jack?

Jack. Burst it! I don't know what to say to it,

though I came partly o' purpose to open a bit of my mind to thee, only other things put it out of my head. —By the way, don't let me forget to remind thee of Tom Trueby's election for verdurer—it comes on next Tuesday—Sir Roger's folks will be there.——Tom's an honest fellow, and of the right kidney; we shall want your voice at the poll.

Sir Jef. Here's my hand; never flinch my friends; I am staunch for Trueby.—Now go on with your business.

Jack. Why, I don't know how 't is; sometimes I think I am rather lonesome of an evening, when the days are short, and the roads bad, so that my neighbours cann't visit me; then the parson's dead, and there I'm out of backgammon; books, you know, books are but dull company; a body is soon tired of reading.

Sir Jef. Certainly: any resource is better than that: it gives me the hip at once.

Jack. Besides, I have had a great loss amongst my greyhounds, and so, do you see—I sometimes think, by way of killing time, to take a wife, that's all.

Sir Jef. Well said, Jack; and you have a mind to take fair Phœbe, as you call her; 'foregad you will have wife enough, and to spare.

Jack. Yes, yes, I am aware of all that; she's a bouncer, I confess; but then it is mostly in winter evenings I have occasion for such a companion; when fishing and shooting seasons set in I am generally from home.

Sir Jef. She has the vengeance of a temper.

Jack. Never mind that, mine will serve for both.

Sir Jef. Have you broke your mind to her?

Jack. No, no, that's to come yet; I shall be a little awkward and ungain at courting, but I've a recipe for that.

Sir Jef. How so, Jack?

Jack. Why I've got a little somewhat by heart out of a book, and can say it pretty smoothly; if I can bring her to that, I shall come tolerably well off—but I hope I shall have your good word, knight: if it is not worth your liking, do you see, I am off, and no harm done.

Sir Jef. 'Tis a small compliment to say I had rather pay her fortune to you than to a stranger, for marry she will; but as for my good word with her, I would not do you the injury to offer it.—There she is in her castle: if thou hast the heart to attack it, march up boldly, the coast is clear; but if thou thinkest it better to fortify with a good dinner, and a flask of wine, friend David shall give thee a bottle of his best, and we'll have a crash, my dear boy, to set thee on thy mettle.

Jack. With all my heart, I like your counsel well; it is an old saying, 'Women and wine;' but I say, wine and women.

Sir Jef. Come thy ways with me, then, and we will have a batch at backgammon, to while away the time till David gives the signal on the buttery-door.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

A Chamber. Enter BLUSHENLY, *and* LADY PARAGON.

Lady P. So, you've escaped from the bottle, but there's a worse danger in wait for you: my aunt Phœbe is out of port, and has set all sails in full chace; ribbands and gauzes streaming at her top, signals of distrest virginity on its cruise for a consort.

Blush. Is there no looking-glass in this house that will speak a plain truth to her?

Lady P. Hellebore cann't cure her: don't you know there is nothing so foolish as the follies of genius, nothing so weak as the weaknesses of the wise?

Blush. Truly observed!—and if she will take the promissory notes of that swindler Vanity, before the solid security of honest Nature, who can help it?

Lady P. Nobody; for let Truth write ever so legibly, Love is blind, you know, and cann't read it: and confusion in the human intellects that little mischievous deity is apt to make: and when he aims an arrow at my aunt, he must be a sorry archer, if he does not hit so broad a mark.—After all, Harry, what do you mean to do? she is very rich.

Blush. And I am very poor, but that's no proof I am very mercenary.

Lady P. She has one strong feature in her favour.

Blush. Her strong box, I grant you. Your lady-

ship seems to think money a tempting circumstance, and so it is in the world's opinion: but I am interested to know your real sentiments; suffer me to ask, if for a moment you can put yourself in my situation, would you marry Mrs Phœbe Latimer?

Lady P. Humph! that's a home question, and before I answer it, I must know what your situation is.

Blush. A thing without parents, and without a name; a waife, a stray that your father has taken up upon his manor, and keeps upon the trespass till its beggarly owner perhaps shall reclaim it.

Lady P. Hold, hold, hold! you quite mistake me, you distress me:—'tis not your circumstances, Harry, but your affections, that my question points at; and sure I ought to know the state of that person's heart, for whom I am called upon to answer in such a case: resolve my question, therefore, and I will reply to yours.

Blush. I believe we had better drop the subject.

Lady P. By no means. Am I to suppose you alike indifferent to all women? that your heart is entirely disengaged?

Blush. I beg there may be no such supposition made.

Lady P. Am I then to suppose the contrary?

Blush. Madam!

Lady P. Nay, be sincere, hide nothing from your advocate, in your own cause.

Blush. I have no cause; I will not speak a falsity, and I cannot declare the truth.—Farewell! [*Going.*

Lady P. Where's the man running?—Come back: must I take up that glove, pray, or you? (*Drops her glove, which he takes up.*)—Stoop, proud spirit, stoop!

Blush. I humbly ask your pardon.

[*Tenders her the glove.*

Lady P. A man of gallantry would have kept it. Oh! if thou hadst half an eye, the brains but of a

wren, the smallest grain of intuition in thee or about thee, thou must ere this have seen and known——

Blush. What? tell me what!

Lady P. What! all ye powers forbid that I should tell thee what!——Go, get thee gone, thou art good for nothing but to put me out of spirits.

Blush. Turn me not away till you are reconciled: instruct me, I beseech you, how I am to act with Mrs Phœbe; for I am distress'd beyond measure.

Lady P. Well, then, if you are disposed for a practice, I'll fight this quarter for my aunt, and you shall defend that for yourself.—Speak, are you ready?

Blush. No, no, no; that will never do.

Lady P. Defend yourself, for I am coming on.—We are now alone, my dear Harry: and as I know you to be the man I may confide in, I shall not scruple to avow you are the man of all the world I most approve and love: a thousand opportunities have occurred for you to discover this, but the delicacy of your principle has determined you to meet my affection with indifference; I am now resolved to prove if that indifference be real or assumed; the measure may seem out of character with strict propriety, but love on my part, and backwardness on yours, compel me to declare myself; and thus I offer you a fond, a faithful, a devoted heart——

Blush. Stop, stop, for pity's sake! you put me out of every thing I had to say: I tell you this will never do.

Lady P. You'll tell me of your obligations to my family; I answer, they are offices that leave us your debtors:—you'll say, you are unknown, dependent, destitute; therein you humble me, and aggrandize yourself; for, with all the nobler superiorities of nature on your side, you leave me nothing but a poor advantage on the score of fortune:—as to your scruples that respect my father——

Blush. Father! you forget you are speaking for Mrs Phœbe; you should say brother.

Lady P. Should I?——Oh, Harry!—Let it pass however; and now for your answer.

Blush. I cannot make any answer.

Lady P. I beg your pardon, you have answered me, completely answer'd; I never saw rebuff more peremptorily given.

Blush. What do you mean? you puzzle me.

Lady P. Then practise it again, till you are perfect; and since I have got so little way on Mrs Phœbe's side, take it yourself, and I'll reply for Mr Blushenly.

Blush. Excuse me: I feel myself unfit to take up any other character than that of the humblest of your servants, and with all respect entreat you to release me.

Lady P. By all means; for, to own the truth, I am not yet prepared to act your part with the insensibility which it demands.——Farewell! [*Exit hastily.*

Blush. O cruel, cruel honour! [*Exit.*

Enter DAVID, *introducing* MAJOR O'FLAHERTY, *followed by two Servants in* SIR JEFFERY'S *livery.*

Dav. Pray, sir, walk in: good sir, use no ceremony: I am but a servant, under favour, yet I am bold to say every friend of Mr Blushenly's is welcome in this house.—Thomas!—William! run about, good lads, till you can find Mr Blushenly—tell *him*—but I ask your honour's pardon; you will be pleased to send your own message.

O'Fla. Make no more words, but tell the young gentleman a stranger wishes to speak with him.

Dav. Sha'n't they carry your name, sir?

O'Fla. I can carry that myself; they will be the nimbler for having nothing to burthen them with.

Dav. Do as you are bid then, and make haste—[*Exeunt Servants severally.*]—What can his business be with Mr Blushenly? (*Aside*) I humbly conceive

you have had a long journey, sir; won't you be pleased to repose yourself?

O'Fla. With your leave, I'll stretch my legs awhile; I have been so long in the saddle, that, except two or three tumbles and a roll by the way, I have scarce felt my feet these three days.

Dav. Bless me! three days in the saddle! Where can he be come from? I wish I could get it out of him. (*Aside.*)—I presume, sir, you are from foreign parts—no offence, I hope?

O'Fla. None in life.

Dav. It will not out of my head but some good luck is to happen this day—He looks like a foreigner. (*Aside.*) Are you last from Flanders, may I ask?

O'Fla. Indeed you may, sir.

Dav. He won't plead; what shall I do? (*Aside.*) —From the city of Lisle, perhaps?

O'Fla. Are you going thither, that you are so curious?

Dav. I have been there, sir; I served a lady who is settled there, Mrs Frances Latimer.

O'Fla. Sir!

Dav. Perhaps you know the lady, sir; I believe she lives there at this day.

O'Fla. I believe not.—And now I hope you are satisfied with the information I have given you.

Dav. I ask pardon for my boldness, sir; but I have known Mr Blushenly from an infant; the first hands that received him at the door of this very house were mine: I was in hopes you had brought news of good fortune to him; I should have sincerely rejoiced at it, for I love him at my heart; every body loves him—but I won't be troublesome.—Here comes the young gentleman himself.

Enter BLUSHENLY.

Blush. I am told, sir, you would speak with me.

O'Fla. I shall be glad of that honour.—I believe

our business does not want a witness; this person may retire.

Blush. David, leave the room.

Dav. Sir, sir!—I hope no mischief; I shall be within call. [*Aside to* BLUSH.

Blush. Go, go! shut the door. [*Exit* DAVID.—And now permit me to request your name, sir?

O'Fla. O'Flaherty, at your command; you may add Major to it, if you are so pleased.—I have travelled a pretty many miles, by sea and land, out of pure love and service to you, young gentleman, if it is you that are called Mr Blushenly.

Blush. My name is Blushenly.

O'Fla. There's your mistake, my dear; upon my faith it is not: cann't you take my word at once for what I tell you?

Blush. I have been so called from my birth, I believe; and though neither honour nor inheritance appertains to it, I have to hope you will not take one name from me till you provide me with another.

O'Fla. You speak as prettily, and as much like a gentleman, as heart can wish.—In one word, the true name upon you is Latimer.

Blush. Latimer!

O'Fla. To be sure: didn't I tell you so at first? for if it is Latimer, look you, how can it possibly be Blushenly? Believe me at a word, and save a long preamble of a story: what grace would there be in my going through the whole catechism with you, when we cann't agree upon the first question?

Blush. Tell your story then in your own way, sir, only be pleased to tell it.

O'Fla. Nothing so easy; say which story you would have, and I'll tell it as you like.—You had but one mother, depend upon it, and her name was Latimer; Frances Latimer, of Lisle, a lady I had the greatest respect for in life; a dear generous soul she was; a saint upon earth, though she made a small slip in her

youth, and bore you over the left shoulder, as the saying is; a frolic, nothing more; but it laid upon her mind, which is wonderful to say.—Oh! she took on piteously about you in her last moments.

Blush. Good Heaven!

O'Fla. Yes, 'twas mighty good of Heaven; you'll have great cause to sing *Te Deum*, when you see what a fortune she has left you.

Blush. What is this you tell me? I cannot doubt but you are serious.

O'Fla. I am not given to be a trifler, and if I were, 'twould be a sorry joke to take so long a journey for: I have the credentials sign'd and seal'd; you'll have 'em all before you, together with her last dying speech, and what she said afterwards in her will.——'Take these papers,' says she to me in her last moments, 'take 'em, Major O'Flaherty, and deliver 'em into nobody's hands but my son's.'

Blush. And where are the papers?

O'Fla. Where are they? safe enough, trust me for that:—there's a little ragged boy at the hedge-tavern hard by, where I baited my garran, has got hold of my saddle-bags, and is bringing them here on his back.

Blush. Mercy upon me! had you the imprudence to trust papers of such consequence to a vagabond boy out of your sight?

O'Fla. Don't believe it, he is not out of my sight, for I asked him his name before I trusted him with the bags.

Blush. His name! what signifies his name?

O'Fla. Nay, if his name don't signify, 'tis all the better, for I have forgot it by the way, 'tis no longer upon my memory: but you'll know it all, when the little whipster comes.

Blush. You alarm me beyond measure: let us go in search of him. [*Going.*

[DAVID *meets them as they are going out.*

Dav. There is a fellow without, who has brought some baggage belonging to this gentleman.

O'Fla. There, there! now you will be easy; now what becomes of your alarm?

Blush. Shew me to the fellow.

Dav. I don't know what to make of all this.

(*Aside, and exeunt.*

Enter JACK HUSTINGS.

Jack. Sir Jeffery has fled the pit, Harry Blushenly is a flincher of old, the ladies are off, the whole house is a solitude, and nothing is left for me but drowning or marrying, and they both go by destiny; therefore, if Mrs Phœbe comes across me, I'll say a short prayer, and wait my fate.—Apropos! here she is!

Enter MRS PHŒBE LATIMER.

Mrs Phœbe, your most humble servant; I think myself fortunate in this meeting.

Phœ. Really! then I conclude, Mr Hustings, you are no friend to contemplation, and do not like your own company: now I am, as the ancients express it, never less alone than when alone.—Could you not pass an hour with a book? the library is open.

Jack. With a book! yes, madam, I can take up a book, when I've nothing else to do.

Phœ. And what books do you chiefly read, pray? —poetry, history, philosophy?

Jack. All's one for that; the Racing Calendar, Cock-fighter's Guide, Complete Angler, and the rest of the classics; nothing comes amiss.—Are you fond of fishing, Mrs Phœbe?

Phœ. In theory extremely so; I can fish with Sannazarius all the day long.

Jack. He's a happy man, truly; but I cannot say I know the gentleman: does he troll, pray now, or fish with a fly?

Phœ. I rather believe with a quill; Sannazarius was a poet of the fifteenth century.

Jack. And that's a wonderful old age for a poet; but fishing's a long-lived amusement.

Phœ. 'Tis a solitary one.

Jack. You've hit it, Mrs Phœbe, 'tis a solitary one; and, to say the truth, I begin to find I must seek out a companion to cheer my solitude, a companion for life, Mrs Phœbe.

Phœ. Oh dear heart! if you are in quest of a wife, pass on; don't let me stop you; you have no time to lose.

Jack. Perhaps I shall go no further.—I have a lady in my thoughts; not one of your flaunting young madams, but a staid, sensible, discreet person, of a suitable age.—I don't choose by the eye, Mrs Phœbe; I ask for no more than I bring: youth and beauty are not indispensables in my choice.

Phœ. If you are contented without them, you are the sooner pleased.—And who may the happy lady be whom you have so flatteringly described?

Jack. One you know very well, Mrs Phœbe; she's not far off.

Phœ. One of our neighbours?

Jack. One of your family, the sister of my friend, Sir Jeffery; if you know the lady's mind, I shall be glad you will inform me of it.

Phœ. Her mind I know sure enough, but her person I should not have guess'd at by your description of it.—I believe I may answer for that lady, that such addresses, which convey an affront, or any addresses from you, Mr Hustings, will meet nothing but repulse.

Jack. That's very extraordinary; for Sir Jeffery told me you was determined of marrying out of hand.

Phœ. Did he so?

Jack. Yes, he did; 'Marry she will,' says he; 'and

to be sure I had rather pay her fortune to you than to a stranger:' these were his very words.

Phœ. Defile not my ears with the vulgar retail of his impertinent discourse. Sir Jeffery shall repent of this insult.

Jack. Now, if I could but fetch her up with the speech; but, as I am a true man, she has frightened it out of my head.—Come, come, sweet Mrs Phœbe, don't be angry with me; you and I have long been friends. Fair bud of beauty! look upon your enamoured lover, suffer him to enfold you in his arms, to clasp you to his panting heart!

Phœ. Keep off! avoid the chamber!—

Jack. One kiss, one kind, consenting, reconciling kiss!— [*Offers to kiss her.*

Phœ. Off, monster!—Are we amongst woods and wilds, with satyrs, or in a civilized society, with men? Here is no scene for Lapithean banquets, thou descendant of the Centaurs!—The ancient Scythians were not more barbarous in their cups than thou art; Rome's monarchy was lost by violence not more shocking than this.

Enter LADY PARAGON.

Lady P. Bless me, aunt Phœbe, what's the matter?

Phœ. Matter enough; this savage would have forced a kiss upon me.

Jack. Why then, as I hope to be saved, I did it for the best.

Lady P. Do you call that your best?—O fie!—Men are strange animals, and when we women throw out our charms, and look alluring, which you, dear aunt, particularly do at this moment, such little frailties will happen.—Come, let me intercede; 'twas but a kiss at most, and I never think a kiss worth fighting for.

Phœ. Nor I, perhaps, in any other case; but he

had the ill-manners to introduce a proposal of marriage, by telling me he did not look for youth or beauty in a wife.

Lady P. That's the consequence of having too many good qualities.—Had you nothing but youth and beauty to recommend you, you had been sure to have heard of them: foolish women always get the finest things said to them.—Go your way; take no leave of her, but begone. [*Aside to* JACK.

Jack. Thou art a dear soul: there's more fuss with these old maids than they are worth. [*Exit.*

Lady P. Well, my dear aunt, how do you find yourself now?

Phœ. Something better; but still in a terrible flutter: my heart beats vehemently.

Lady P. Oh yes, these men do set our hearts a-beating; but you see he is gone, the ravisher is gone; I hope you will recover by degrees. I'll stay by you till you are safe: if he should come back, I can scream out whilst you are defending yourself; for, let the worst come to the worst, he can stop the mouth but of one of us at a time.

Phœ. In my days, lovers were on their knees to their ladies for the favour of a salute; and the concession of the cheek was not then to be obtained without long solicitation, tears, and entreaties.

Lady P. Those were fine days indeed; then a lady set her favours at some price: now so many give away their goods for nothing, that they have fairly spoil'd the market.—If Mr Blushenly now——

Phœ. You do him wrong; in all our intercourse he never once solicited——

Lady P. Oh fie! take care of what you say: remember, remember!

Phœ. What should I remember!

Lady P. The tapestry bed-chamber, when you was shewing him king Solomon and his concubines in chain-stitch.—Defend me from these modest men!

your beef-fed country squires are nothing to them: they have the will, indeed, but not the wit to be mischievous.

Phœ. Well, well, I sha'n't easily be persuaded out of my good opinion of Mr Blushenly.

Lady P. Keep to that, and you are safe: good opinion is one thing, and love is another.

Phœ. True; yet in some cases they go together.

Lady P. And then they drive at a furious rate, truly: when Love holds the whip, Reason drops the reins. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

A Hunting-Hall. SIR JEFFERY LATIMER, BLUSHENLY, *and* O'FLAHERTY. *A Table with Papers.*

Sir Jef. Joy to you, my dear Harry, all joy attend you!—The will's a good will; you have a brave property; your title's firm, pen and parchment cann't make a better. I am beside myself with joy; I'll have a jubilee for this month to come; there sha'n't be a sober man in the country. I could laugh and cry, and be merry and sad, or any thing but in my senses.—Come into my arms, my dear, dear Mr —— What's your name?

O'Fla. Dennis O'Flaherty is my name. I hope you like it; it has been a pretty while in the family, and should be loth to change it.

Sir Jef. I shall love your name and your nation as long as I have breath. Why, a man of your parts might have married this cousin of mine, and snapped her whole fortune, if you had not been the noblest fellow upon earth.

O'Fla. Where's the nobleness of not being a rascal? I prize the friendship of the fair sex too well to raise money upon them. It was my fortune in life to inherit nothing at all; and I have not lessened it: my good name and my good sword are still my own, and there is no incumbrance upon either; I have not mortgaged them to dishonour, and, with the grace of Heaven, I never intend it.

Blush. Mr O'Flaherty, I would fain thank you; but my heart is too full; time and my future conduct must declare my gratitude: whatever may be my good fortune, you, under Providence, are the father of it.

O'Fla. It has been my lot, young gentleman, to meet a great deal of good fortune in the world—belonging to other people, I mean—and 'tis a mighty pleasant thing to carry up and down, though I have never kept any to my own share.

Sir Jef. Ah, my good friend, 'tis well my cousin Frances fell into honest hands; she was a tempting trust in a distant country.

O'Fla. What difference does the distance make in my honesty, or her trust? Not but I must own some of your countrymen, who have had their tempting trusts at a distance, have remembered to leave the trust behind 'em, and bring home nothing but the temptation.

Sir Jef. That's true, that's true. Oh! that you had heard what a speech I had like to have made one day in parliament on this very subject.—'Mr Speaker,' says I, starting on my legs, 'shall I tamely sit down? 'shall I sit down tamely, Mr Speaker?' Would you think it?—passion choked me, and I did sit down.

O'Fla. What a pity's that, when a man has got a full bottle, and cann't pluck out the cork!—I'll tell you what, Sir Jeffery, you need not be surprised at finding a poor catholic, like myself, an honest man; you have a ready way to keep us so, by shutting us out of your service.

Sir Jef. And now, Harry, that you are of the house of the Latimers, if it drops in your hands, I am clear of the blame.

O'Fla. O' my conscience, that's well thought of; if there's a gap in your pedigree, old gentleman, you had better trust to him for filling it up than yourself; ay, and let me tell you, you are not a little beholden to the poor dear soul that's dead, for putting a streak in your ladder, when you was on the last step of it: marry! but she made a good job of it, though she had only her left hand to work with.

Blush. Touch not upon that subject! I am to mourn a mother, who, till the last hour of her life, never acknowledged me; I must remember her, therefore, as a benefactress rather than a parent.—You, sir, have ever been a father to me.

Sir Jef. Take my daughter into council then, and be a son to me. You see the conditions of your mother's bequest; unless you marry Lady Paragon, you have only a life-holding in your estate: Frances, with all her failings, had a family-feeling for the house of Latimer.

Blush. 'Tis that condition, with other reasons of equal delicacy, makes me entreat you both to keep this matter a secret, till I have sounded the affections of your adorable daughter. I would owe my happiness to nothing but her free choice and bounty—I beseech you, therefore, to conceal this event, for a few hours at least, from Lady Paragon, from Mrs Phœbe, and, in short, from all your family, but honest David; his friendly anxiety must be relieved. You will promise me this, Sir Jeffery?

Sir Jef. Twenty long years and upwards have I brooded upon this nest-egg, and now the chicken's hatcht, I mayn't cackle;—'tis a little hard, but I'll do as you bid me.

Blush. Major O'Flaherty, I may expect the same from you?

O'Fla. To be sure you may, my dear:—amuse yourself in your own way, ride your own round-about, so you do but come to the right point at last.

Sir Jef. Come, Harry, this business being dispatched, let us now go and tap the best bottle in my cellar to the health of this worthy gentleman, to whose good offices we are both so highly indebted.

O'Fla. For the bottle, Sir Jeffery, I am your man; for the good offices you speak of, speak no more about 'em; honesty is due to every man, and how should you be indebted to me for what I owe you?

Sir Jef. Come, sir, let me shew you the way.—— [*Going.*

O'Fla. Mr Latimer, with your leave, I shall be following you.

Blush. By no means—I am at home;—but not Latimer, if you please, call me Blushenly.

O'Fla. Ay, ay, that's true—Blushenly—now you go by your wrong name: that's right!—Well, well! let me see, I call'd you by your right name, but that's wrong—By my soul, between both but it's a very puzzling affair.

Enter JACK HUSTINGS.

Sir Jef. Hold, hold, hold! as I live, a very admirable recruit to our party.—Mr Hustings, this is Major O'Flaherty; Major O'Flaherty, this is my friend Mr Hustings.—I pray you be known to each other, gentlemen both! honest men don't meet every day.

Blush. This is my moment to escape. [*Exit hastily.*

O'Fla. I am proud to know you, sir; you bear your credentials about you; there's a passport in

your countenance that will carry you through every kingdom in Europe.—Sir Jeffery Latimer, your friend here looks as if he could say *Boh!* to a bottle as well as most men.

Sir Jef. I'll be his sponsor, though it were in the dark.—And now, friend Jack, shall we drink to the health of fair Phœbe, your future bride?

Jack. Hush, hush! if you love me; no more of that, knight: let the wind whistle as it may, if every month in the twelve was November, I'll tuck myself up with a halter, before I'll couple with a wife.

Sir Jef. Are you so soon disheartened?—never fear, man; you and fair Phœbe will make it up before night.

Jack. Then I'll give my skin to the tanner before morning, for you'll find it on the beam—why, she flouted me in a style as proud as Nebuchadnezzar.

Sir Jef. And she will be as humble as a trout before this day passes over her head, or I'll never venture at prediction again: retain this gentleman in your cause, and I'll ensure a verdict in your favour.

O'Fla. Is there any quarrel a-foot? What is the matter, may I ask?

Sir Jef. A lady's matter; a small suit at matrimony between this worthy gentleman and a maiden sister of mine, Mrs Phœbe Latimer: the good lady, it must be owned, is rather on the down-hill passage towards the vale of years, and has cast the eyes of her affection on the young gentleman we just now parted with.

O'Fla. When one is going down the hill and t'other up, nothing so natural as that both should meet; but, my life upon it, Mr Latimer will give her the go-by.

Sir Jef. Mr Blushenly, you would say.

O'Fla. Well remembered; you put that leaf into my book in good time.

Enter DAVID.

Sir Jef. Now, David, what's the news with you?

Dav. Strange news, sir.—Mr Ruefull is coming to visit you.

Sir Jef. Ruefull to visit me! I want faith to believe you.

Dav. His servant is in the house; and if you like to see a curiosity, gentlemen, you will order him in.

Jack. Oh, bring him in by all means, David; I should like to see the running footman to a tortoise.—Who is dead in your house, knight, that old Ruefull is come to sit up by the corpse? [*Exit* DAVID.

O'Fla. Ruefull! Ruefull! sure I've heard that name before.

Jack. When a miser or a man-hater is mentioned, Ruefull's name is in every body's mouth.

Sir Jef. 'Tis a rough shell, but there's virtue at the heart of him.—But I see the fellow coming.—Get yourselves ready, gentlemen, for death is at the door.

DUMPS *is brought in by* DAVID.

O'Fla. (*Seeing* DUMPS *as he enters.*) Oh the Beelzebub! What's here?—Which of the seven deadly sins begot you? What gibbet have you defrauded of its furniture?

Dumps. I am serving-man to Squire Ruefull; I hastened in advance, to signify the coming on of my master.——*Salve, Domine!—Et tu quoque!—Pax in domo!*

O'Fla. What the plague!—Which of your evil tongues is that?

Dumps. 'Tis Latin; I learnt it when I shewed the tombs in Westminster Abbey.

O'Fla. Oho! if you come out of the tombs, *'tis* no wonder you speak the dead languages.

Dumps. *Rectè.*

Sir Jef. When will your master be here, fellow?

Dumps. Anon.

Sir Jef. Hark ye, David, take this mummy into the cellar, and wet his dust with a cup of October.—You'll find better company in my vaults, friend, than the Abbey's.

Dumps. Oh, dear, sir, I was reasonable merry, till I came into my master's service; he is a monument of a man: we should have had a terrible journey of it, if we had not luckily fallen in with a black job by the way, and kept company with the corpse to Exeter cathedral.

Jack. I must be acquainted with this fellow.—What is your name?

Dumps. My name is Dumps, an' please you.

Jack. How long have you been in Mr Ruefull's service?

Dumps. Five years by the calendar, five centuries by calculation.—I had indeed the choice of being keeper of a pest-house, but I was fool enough to withstand the offer; and, all other trades failing, took into my present service.

O'Fla. What other trades have you followed? Let us know your history.

Dumps. 'Tis soon told, gentlemen:—I am the son of a sexton, and worked at my father's business in my youth; I then went into the service of a dissecting surgeon, and, with my father's help, furnished my master's academy with subjects.

O'Fla. Oh, Lord have mercy upon us!

Dumps. When that trade failed, I hired myself out to the Humane Society.

O'Fla. That was the devil of a jump backwards.

Dumps. Many an honest gentleman now walks about with breath of my blowing;—but it was too much labour for one pair of lungs; and, by giving life to a drowned alderman upon a swan-hopping

party, I contracted a consumption, and turned murder-monger to a morning paper.

O'Fla. Murder-monger! there you are in your old quarters once more.—And what's murder-monger, I would fain ask?

Dumps. Casualty-compiler, an' please you, inventer of murders to amuse our customers; but they said I wanted variety in my violent deaths—I made too much use of the brewer's dray; so they took a tragic poet in my place, and I was turned into Westminster Abbey, as valet-de-chambre to the ragged regiment, to brush the dust off the faces of the wax-work; from thence I came into Squire Ruefull's service; and if I take another step downwards, it must be to the old one, for I can go no lower in this world.

Sir Jef. Try the depth of my cellar first, and then we'll talk further with you: get you gone.—(*Exit* DUMPS.)—But I see the ladies coming—let us step aside, my good friend, and concert our evidence, and then we shall agree in the same story.

O'Fla. Faith, and that's well thought of; for if the truth is not to be spoken, 'tis mighty proper to agree what we shall put in the place of it. [*Exeunt.*

Enter PHŒBE, LADY PARAGON, *and* BLUSHENLY.

Phœ. Mr Blushenly, who is that stranger with my brother?

Blush. His name is O'Flaherty, an officer in the Austrian service.

Phœ. But what is his business here?

Blush. He comes to announce the death of your relation, Mrs Frances Latimer.

Phœ. What do you tell me? Is she dead? this is news indeed:—do you hear this, Lady Paragon? The death of Mrs Latimer is an event very interesting to us all.

Lady P. As I had scarce the honour of knowing the lady, I cannot say I am particularly affected by the event: if any good person is made happy by her fortune, so far I shall be rejoiced at it.

Phœ. Why, your father is her heir at law: I wonder you can be so insensible.

Lady P. I hope my father has enough without it; there are people in the world I should rather wish her fortune to.—I recollect, Harry, she was once very good to you—what shall I give you for your legacy?

Blush. I will not sell it, because I have never yet had any good luck to dispose of;—but promise that you will share it with me, and, believe me, in that case, I shall find the old proverb true, and half will be much more than the whole.

Lady P. 'Tis done! I agree to it, so the partition be reciprocal.

Enter SIR JEFFERY LATIMER *and* O'FLAHERTY.

Sir Jef. Where are the ladies? I've a budget of news for them.——Sister Phœbe, this is Major O'Flaherty, a friend of our cousin, Mrs Francis Latimer; I believe his name is not unknown to you.—Major, this is my daughter, Lady Paragon.

[O'FLAHERTY *bows to the ladies severally.*

O'Fla. A Paragon indeed!—I am sorry I must put you in mourning, ladies, and strike these fine colours, that become you so well; I bring you news of the death of a relation.

Phœ. I understand my cousin Frances is dead.

O'Fla. She is all that, madam, the more's the pity.

Phœ. Pity indeed! I fear she was not very fit to die; I hope she had time to repent.

O'Fla. Plenty of time—and to make her will too.

Phœ. In that, I suppose, you have an interest, sir.

O'Fle. Oh! a very great one; I have the pleasure to see every shilling bequeathed to her own son.

Phœ. Her son! her own son! Oh monstrous!

O'Fla. Where's the monstrous part of it? She would have been a monster if she had not done it.

Lady P. Do you hear that, Blushenly?—our bargain is drawn.

Blush. I beg your pardon, I shall hold you to it.

Phœ. I never heard she had a son: where is he? what is he?—She was a single woman, how could she have a son?

O'Fla. I believe there was a very natural reason for it; she was not a single woman in that particular, I take it.

Sir Jef. Puzzle yourself with no more questions;—the world says, this son of my cousin's merits his good fortune; you will see him in this house; he is near at hand, and only waits to know if it will be agreeable he should present himself.—Lady Paragon, I hope you have no objection to a visit from him.

Lady P. How can I, sir? an agreeable visitor will always be an accession to our family circle.

Sir Jef. You will be very fond of him when you know him.

Lady P. No doubt I shall, and before I know him, by your character of him.

Sir Jef. Have a care of yourself, Louisa; for if you should fall desperately in love, and throw yourself away upon the best young man in England, you will go near to break my heart with—joy.

Lady P. The Heavens forbid! I would not be guilty of such a thing for the world.

Sir Jef. 'Tis no matter, in spite of all my warning you will do it.

Lady P. Impossible!

Sir Jef. I tell you, you will do it;—sister Phœbe, remember I predict it.

Phœ. Stay till the event happens, brother Jeffery and then you may safely risque a prediction.

Sir Jef. What do you say in the case, Major O'Flaherty? are you with me in opinion?

O'Fla. Oh! most clearly; and the more her ladyship protests against it, give me leave to say, the more I am persuaded of it.

Lady P. That's severe indeed, if ladies are to be taken by contraries.

O'Fla. Ladies like you, madam, must be taken as we can get them; such prizes don't fall to every man's lot: if Sir Jeffery has a mind for a wager, I shall be very glad to go sharer with him.

Lady P. Agreed! what shall the wager be?

O'Fla. Any thing but money.

Lady P. I'll put my life upon the stake.

O'Fla. Any thing but murder: for your money, I don't value it; and for your life, it is, in my opinion, above all value.

Lady P. Name your own terms, then; the bet is lost before 'tis laid.

O'Fla. Let it be a wedding-favour, then: a cockade to mount in our hats, and a courtesy to wear upon our lips.—Will you strike hands to this?

Lady P. Hands and heart—Blushenly shall hold stakes.

Blush. Give them to me, then, and let me seal the treasure thus, and thus—(*Kisses her hand.*)—When I forfeit this deposit, it must be death that takes it from me.

Sir Jef. All this does not stagger me: I tell you, daughter, you have laid a losing wager, and so good b'ye to you.—Come, gentlemen. [*Exit.*

O'Fla. I am your ladyship's most obedient—I shall call upon you for payment; 'tis true I have only half a share, but any half of your ladyship's favours is more by half than any man deserves.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter DAVID *and* DUMPS.

Dav. Well, Master Dumps, how do you find yourself now?

Dumps. Gayly.

Dav. How sits his honour's old October on your stomach?

Dumps. Bravely.

Dav. Now you are free of Merryfield-Hall: every body that comes here goes through a wetting.

Dumps. *Bene.*

Dav. 'Tis the custom of the house.

Dumps. *Floreat!*

Enter Servant, and speaks to DUMPS.

Serv. Are not you servant to the gentleman just arrived?

Dumps. Who, old Ruefull?

Serv. I don't know his name; but if your's be Dumps, he is calling out lustily for you in the hall. —Run, and see what he wants; for he won't be pacified without you.

Dumps. I run! no, if I could have done that, I would have run out of his service long enough ago. —Hang him, earthworm, let him crawl to me; I'll not budge.

Dav. Hush, hush! keep a good tongue in your head, Dumps; here your master comes.

[*Exeunt* DAVID *and Servant.*

DUMPS *retires to the back Scene. Enter* RUEFULL.

Rue. Are they fools born, or fools bewitched, in this house?——'Twere better I took lodgings in a belfry, and slept to the ringing of bob-majors, than harbour in this academy of confusion.——Here have I been calling for my rascal, and every rascal runs but the right one; half a score tongues to answer, not a hand to help: the building of Babel was a

Quaker's meeting to it.——Where is this fellow of mine? 'Tis plain he has not broken his neck, else I should have stumbled upon his corpse.——Dumps! why Dumps, I say!

Dumps. Here am I.

Rue. Here am I! hedgehog:—Well, and here I am. Why don't you move at my call? Are you in the stocks? Are you in the conjurer's circle?

Dumps. Very likely, for my head runs round.

Rue. Why, you are tipsy; you have been drinking, sirrah; your eyes are set in your head.

Dumps. I hope so.

Rue. Sot, did not I warn you against this?—How often have I preached to you on the virtue of sobriety?

Dumps. Yes, but you made a virtue of necessity; you never gave me a chance to get tipsy in your service.

Rue. And I'll take care you never shall again, sirrah. I'll muzzle you for this: I'll shut you up in the Eddystone upon rotten biscuit and rain-water, for a twelvemonth.

Dumps. Do; then I shall go out of the world in a blaze.—*Vale.* [*Exit.*

Enter SIR JEFFERY.

Sir Jef. What, old acquaintance! are you come amongst us? Welcome to Merryfield-Hall; stay with me an hour, stay with me a month, once for all, you are heartily welcome!

Rue. I am obliged to you: It becomes the master of the mansion to welcome his guests: but when his servants do the office for him, they are apt to overact their parts. Your fellows have intoxicated my fool with their western hospitality; and I am as much to seek without him, as a blind beggar without his dog.—I pray you get somebody to lead me about the house.

Sir Jef. I will be your servant; every body will be your servant.

Rue. Let it be some civil gentleman, then, and none of those powdered coxcombs I met in your lobby. Servants now-a-days dress so like gentlemen, and gentlemen so like servants, that the less ceremony is with the better sort: If Harry Blushenly is with you, turn me over to him.

Sir Jef. He'll be happy to attend upon you; I expect him every moment.

Rue. I have a foolish liking to the lad—but no matter.—Hark ye, friend Jeffery; if you foist me into one of your state-beds, with a villainous Dutch device of fair Bathsheba, or the queen of Sheba, to keep me company, I had rather you should shut me into your old tower, with a screech-owl at my casement, and a death-watch at my tester.—If you make a stranger of me that way, you'll be sure to keep me so.

Sir Jef. 'Fore George, you have hit it: The chamber in the old tower will suit you to a truth—But hold, hold! that won't do neither—if you ring your bell there, not a soul will come to it, was it to save your life or their own.

Rue. What's the matter with it?

Sir Jef. 'Tis haunted: Tom Dismal walks there.

Rue. I knew him when I was a boy; he was your father's butler: a melancholy man he was: he taught me the History of the Great Plague, and the Fire of London.

Sir Jef. He tuck'd himself up on the beam, in the great frost, thirty-nine.

Rue. He could not do it in a cooler moment.—But look! here comes your young man; go to your company, and leave us together.

Sir Jef. You shall have your humour; so good bye to you. [*Exit.*

Enter BLUSHENLY.

Blush. I am happy to see you, sir: I hope you are in good health.

Rue. No, no, child, no such thing: I am never in good health: throw away no time in such silly compliments. Shut the door, for your owls in this house are broad awake in noon-day.—So, so! that's well.—I have taken an idle whim in my head, youngster, since you was at the Hermitage, that I am rather ashamed of, and therefore, do you see, I choose to make all fast, before I come to confession.

Blush. I believe, sir, nobody can overhear us, you have any commands in private for me.

Rue. Was not it three days you passed at my cottage?

Blush. I think it was, sir.

Rue. I dare say you thought them thirteen; but you played the hypocrite well.

Blush. Oh for shame, sir! you must believe to the contrary, or think me the most ungrateful of all men.

Rue. No, no, no, no! I tell you I don't think it.—I have an odd humour of my own, I know I have, but I like you, I have a regard for you, young man; and that's more than I have said to any body these thirty years; I suppose if I was better acquainted with you, I should be cured of my weakness.

Blush. Perhaps you would, sir, for I'll not boast of my own deservings.

Rue. I like you the better for it, I like you the better for it. I hate professions; I am sick when I meet a fellow bolstered up with bladders, puff'd full of his own empty praises. I hope you don't think I am fool enough to come here upon a visit to old Jeffery.—Not I, nor to Dame Partlet, his cackling sister, either.—He has got his daughter home, has he not?

Blush. Yes, sir, Lady Paragon is part of the family.

Rue. A blockhead that he was, to marry her to a gamester.—He deserves to be hung up by the heels, with a warning pasted on the gibbet to all fathers, mothers, and guardians. Why didn't he give her to you?

Blush. Alas! sir, I had neither father, mother, nor fortune.

Rue. What then? You had a better pedigree without parents, than she has with them; and for fortune, what's that? If you was of my way of thinking, you would not take it was it offered to you; why, I have got a fortune, youngster, a great fortune, if that be all, and a great house; but *Magna domus magnum malum* is my motto; a hut by the sea-side is the castle of my comfort.—I have something to say to you on the subject of this young woman; but first let me have a sight of her.

Blush. She is now taking her walk in the garden; shall we join her?

Rue. With all my heart—shew me the way.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

MRS PHŒBE LATIMER, *alone.*

Mrs Phœ. If this silly brother of mine was not the strangest compound of contraries in nature, I should think there was some plot in his proceeding; for it seems as if he encouraged Blushenly, whilst he was recommending Latimer; yet he protests to me his heart is set upon the match: But you may as well teach method to a monkey, as expect consistency in him. —Well met, sir! I must beg your patient answer to a few questions.

Enter BLUSHENLY.

Blush. Propose them.

Phœ. What are you doing in this family, Mr Blushenly? Are you, or are you not, apprised of my brother's wishes for the disposal of his daughter to the heir of my cousin Latimer?

Blush. I am, madam.

Phœ. Are you disposed to promote or to obstruct that alliance?

Blush. Warmly to promote it.

Phœ. Then you take a very extraordinary method of doing it, let me tell you:—I can hardly believe Lady Paragon will be the more disposed to give her hand to Mr Latimer, for the ardour with which Mr Blushenly kisses it.

Blush. She has hampered me; but I cannot disclose myself to her yet. [*Aside.*

Phœ. I perceive you are embarrassed.—Female hearts, young gentleman, cannot resist such gallantries; there is nothing else wanting in your character to render you irresistible.—You must not kiss her hand again, indeed you must not.

Blush. If it was done to recommend Mr Blushenly, and not Mr Latimer, set me down in your opinion for the meanest of mankind.

Phœ. Whom but yourself can it recommend?—Nature is your advocate, Mr Blushenly; she wants no help; she has bestowed upon you attractions more than enough; no one is secure within the sphere of their activity; I speak upon conviction:—Oh! had you dealt so by me! but you are altered, you are estranged from me; you treat me disdainfully, Mr Blushenly.

Blush. For which of my sins am I to be thus tormented?—(*Aside.*)—How so, I beseech you? When have I been thus guilty?

Phœ. When!—Have you forgot then how, in spite of all I could devise to stop you, you run to the coquettish lure of Lady Paragon, like a quail to the call, whilst the net was spreading to entrap you?

Blush. Well, madam, perhaps I cannot defend every little inattention to prudence; you must take me on the tenor of my life; and I trust it will never happen to me to be found wanting in esteem for you. As to Lady Paragon, be assured, I will never oppose the presumptuous addresses of a foundling to the just pretensions of a man of fortune.

Phœ. You judge wisely, Mr Blushenly; I commend your resolution: she is not fit to be a wife.

Blush. She is not fit to be a wife to a Blushenly, I confess to you: When that name comes into union with a Latimer, it will not be with Lady Paragon; depend upon it.

Phœ. Now, now indeed I understand you;—that was kindly said; that was like yourself: You have relieved an anxious throbbing heart.—Oh, Mr Blushenly, you must not kiss her hand again—Indeed I cannot bear it.

Blush. Be content! Every thing shall be cleared up before this day is at an end—At present, I must take my leave; but an hour sha'n't pass before I will see you again.

Phœ. Indeed! shall we meet so soon again?

Blush. Without fail—Then I will hold back nothing from you.

Phœ. Nor I from you; till then, farewell!—(*Exit* BLUSH.) 'Tis done! 'tis settled! That important matter is at last adjusted. As for their jeers and jibes, I value them not. I'll draw my fortune into my own hands.—Let me see!—Twenty thousand, at five per cent.—A neat income in a cheap country; a retired little box, with a spare room for a nursery; a post-chaise for myself, and a nag for my husband.—Why, 'tis affluence; 'tis luxury; 'tis the paradise of human life!——Pshaw! this fellow again!

Enter JACK HUSTINGS.

Jack. Don't be frightened, Mrs Phœbe! you have nothing to fear: I have seen my error, and thoroughly repent of it.

Phœ. 'Tis well you have, sir.

Jack. Very true; 'tis a happy reformation—but who can command himself at all times, Mrs Phœbe?—Where's the man that can do it? I was surprised, taken unawares, passion ran away with me like an unbroke horse; but I have got him under now; I can govern him with a twine of thread.

Phœ. 'Tis well you can, sir.

Jack. Very true, Mrs Phœbe, 'tis a joyful change.—I see I am not the man; a lady of your talents

can't take up with a country 'squire; 'tis not to be thought of— Blushenly carries all before him.

Phœ. Where did your sagacity collect that, Mr Hustings?

Jack. 'Tis not I only that see it; all the neighbours talk of nothing else. I thought indeed disparity of years might have stood in his way; but I see you do not start at trifles; your generosity has surmounted that objection: As for fortune, I know you have a spirit above that.

Phœ. Whether you know it or not, I have that spirit, sir.

Jack. Yes, Mrs Phœbe, I am ready to bear witness to your spirit; and, though a discarded lover, have some hopes, by the blessing of a good constitution, to survive it, and dance at your wedding still.—Happy be the man! he has the merit of admiring you for your youth and beauty—I had the misfortune to address you for your virtue and discretion.

Enter SIR JEFFERY LATIMER, RUEFULL, *and* LADY PARAGON.

Sir Jef. Sister Phœbe, here is an old friend and servant of yours, Mr Ruefull: He is not quite so jovial as Jack Hustings, nor so young as Harry Blushenly; but, if you like a melancholy lover, I'll pit my friend against all England.

Rue. Ah, Mrs Phœbe! a pretty many years have gone over our heads since I handed you to your berlin from the opera of Griselda. I was then a young man just come home from my travels, and you a fine gay girl in your bloom, just setting out in your career of conquests.—By the same token, I remember I broke a glass hoop-ring, which it was then a fashion to wear, into your finger by squeezing your hand; I shall never forget the pretty flutter it threw you into, when the blood started through your glove: I penn'd

a sonnet on the occasion, in elegiac metre, that had some points in it; but it did not move; you was ever inexorable.

Phœ. Such a thing may have passed, but I was too young to carry the impression in remembrance.

Rue. Very likely, for I dare say your wound healed quicker than mine.—I retired from the gay world soon after, where I had no desire to pass for a splenetic companion amongst men of pleasure; since when I have made some friendships with the dead, merely that we may not be absolute strangers to each other when we meet; however, I have this advantage in it, that I am going to my connections, and you are parting from yours. Not that I would be understood to insinuate that you have any symptoms of immediate decay about you, Mrs Phœbe; on the contrary, I think your air and apparel more gay and juvenile than I should have looked for in a person of your years; and I rejoice to see you carry them off so much above my expectation.—Truly you are a fine woman of your age, a very fine woman of your age still. [MRS PHŒBE *walks aside in a passion.*

Jack. Wormwood, knight, wormwood! She is broiling with vexation.

Sir Jef. Hark ye, daughter Paragon, cut her lace, and save her stays from bursting.

Lady P. Worse and worse! Here's Blushenly coming; I cannot bear to see her suffer.—Mr Ruefull, I shall grow jealous if you make all these fine speeches to my aunt, and not let me have my turn. —Go to my aunt, Harry, go; I can assure you she has her full share of admiration in this company, and you are throwing weight into the heavier scale.—— Why don't you do as I bid you?

[*Apart to* BLUSHENLY.

[BLUSHENLY *having entered during this speech of* LADY PARAGON'S, *she makes signs to him to go to* MRS PHŒBE; *which he at first misunderstands, but afterwards goes and converses apart with her.*]

Rue. There is something very sincere in your challenge, young lady; I like the manner of it well; and, to tell you the truth, I came hither purposely to see you; for, though I am an old fellow with one foot in my coffin, I hope there's no harm if I take a parting peep at youth and beauty before death shuts down the lid. I was curious, you must know, to see you with my own eyes, and hear with my own ears; for, had I taken what that idle young fellow reported upon trust, I should have the strangest opinion of you in nature.

Lady P. How so, I pray, how so? I should expect he, of all men, would report of me as a friend.

Rue. I should doubt that, for he made you out to be a miracle of human goodness—Now that's a shot point-blank against all my experience and belief.

Phœ. Oh! that I had that man's tongue in my pocket!—Will nobody silence him!

Lady P. You are justified in your incredulity; for I shall not scruple to confess that I am more proud of his partiality than I could be of the truth itself.

Rue. That's a fair confession at least; and if it does not serve to convey a very favourable impression of your judgment, it enables me to guess at your affections towards the young man at your elbow: And I am persuaded I shall have my old friend Mrs Phœbe on my side, if I wish you both happy in each other.

Phœ. Are you so, sir? Are you so? Why do you take upon yourself to answer for me in the case?

Rue. Because I think you have lived long enough in the world to see the misery of unequal matches;

—Where affections meet, where characters tally, where tempers agree, who regards fortune?

Jack. Not Mrs Phœbe, I assure you; she has a spirit above that—you know you told me so yourself just now.

Phœ. Who desired you to interfere?

Rue. Then their ages, madam—there, I'm sure, you'll own they're match'd. Now I hold it in abhorrence, and equally a sin against nature in either sex, were an old fellow, like myself, to couple his infirmities to the youth and beauty of Lady Paragon, or a woman of your gravity to befool herself with a ridiculous passion for him there.

Jack. Lack-a-day, sir! Mrs Phœbe can get over that too.

Phœ. Who told you what I can get over, or what I cannot get over? I desire I may neither be quoted for an example, nor referred to as a witness in these matters.—And you must give me leave to tell you, Mr Ruefull, that it is unusual for strangers like you to interfere in family matters, and take up the concerns of other people's alliances, as if they were their own.

Rue. Whether I am officious or not, madam, time must shew; but I trust there is no offence in saying, that if this young lady was my daughter, I would bestow her on Mr Blushenly; or, was he my son, I would recommend him to Lady Paragon: this is my opinion, Mrs Phœbe, and I am ready to back it with my purse, if it is wanted. I believe I have as good an estate as my old friend here, perhaps I might say a better; for I have nursed it pretty carefully, and lived upon the gnawing of a crust;—'twas my humour, and I had nobody's leave to ask for mortifying myself. I am going out of the world, this young man is coming into it.—If Sir Jeffery will step aside with me, perhaps I shall convince him at least that I did not come here officiously, and for nothing. [*Exit.*

Jack. Who calls this man a miser?

Lady P. I am in love with him; he has won my heart for ever.

Blush. 'Tis a rough humour, but a most benevolent nature.

Sir Jef. Sister Phœbe, what do you think of all this?

Phœ. I think it a mere mouthful of moonshine; true lunatic's diet; the cookery of a crack'd brain; frothr to feed fools with; you will find a better legacy in Don Diego's will: the man is in his dotage.

Sir Jef. A word in your ear.—You are still for Mr Latimer? [*Aside.*

Phœ. I am. [*Aside.*

Sir Jef. Positively? [*Aside.*

Phœ. Peremptorily. [*Aside.*

Sir Jef. Here's my hand, then: my daughter marries Frances Latimer's son, or I'll make the house too hot to hold her. [*Aside. Exit.*

Phœ. So far all is safe—but I don't like these whisperings—I must interrupt their conference. [*Aside.* Mr Blushenly!—Niece Paragon!—You will forgive me, but——

Blush. Stay, madam, let me speak a word in private with your aunt. (*To* LADY PARAGON.)—Mrs Phœbe, you betray yourself by this impatience; leave me, if you please, with Lady Paragon.

Phœ. Why must I leave you?

Blush. Because—because you must.

Phœ. Sure!—You're grown very peremptory.

Blush. I make it my condition—my request—will that suffice?

Phœ. Well!—but you'll keep faith with me—— you'll remember!—I'm gone.——[*Aside.*] How provokingly handsome she looks! I cann't bear the sight of her. [*Exit.*

Blush. At last we are alone; and I now press the moment that decides upon my hope.—This Latimer, whom she so anxiously expects, whom your father

recommends, and who is prepared to throw himself at your feet, is now in this very house.

Lady P. Well, if he is, what then? Nor he nor they have supernatural power; and human means shall never force me to a second sacrifice.

Blush. Are you so resolute?

Lady P. My heart is pledged: you know the holder of it.

Blush. Then I have undertaken a hard task indeed; for I am to move you for that very Latimer.

Lady P. Come, come, I've found you out: this is a return for my raillery about my aunt's strong box; but, unless you can find pleasure in putting me to pain, I beg you to be serious.

Blush. I never was more serious in my life.

Lady P. Sir!—Mr Blushenly!—I did not think you could be cruel to me.—We never meet again. [*Going.*

Blush. Stop, I conjure you, stop!

Lady P. Why should I?—Oh Harry! If you are still so blind as not to see the openest heart in nature, legible by every eye but yours, I'll sooner do a violence to my sex's delicacy, by an avowal of my love, than leave it in your power to make a plea of ignorance.

Blush. You shall not do your dignity that wrong; I see and know your heart.

Lady P. You see it by false lights, you know it by unfair reports; else would you treat it as you do?—No, you mistake a playful spirit for a levity of principle; you think me a coquette, who likes and dislikes by caprice, and whose favours, like false coin received in payment, you are impatient to pass off to any other dupe that will take them.

Blush. I were a brute without reason could I so judge of you. The playfulness of your spirit shews the purity of your nature; a heart like yours would make an angel's face superfluous; I think with too

much reverence of your virtue to recollect that you are beautiful.

Lady P. For which then of these two perfections do you reject me? Is it my virtue or my beauty you revolt from?—Inconsistent flattery! Who throws away what he admires? Who draws back from proffered happiness? either too proud to receive a blessing, or too suspicious to believe it is intended.

Blush. I neither have the pride nor the suspicion you describe; and I only regret there is any thing between us, which you have not the pleasure of bestowing.

Lady P. Why then do you assume a disinterestedness which cuts me to the heart? and with a cold air of prudence, as fruitless as it is cruel, attempt to turn inflexible affections from yourself to Latimer?

Blush. Because I am that Latimer.

Lady P. What do I hear!

Blush. Oh, let me clasp you to my heart! words are too weak to tell you how I love!

Lady P. Oh! what a head for stratagem is thine!—a notable experiment, to prove that it is day by the light of the sun!—Oh, Harry, Harry! if I could play the hypocrite, I would revoke all I have said, and turn your own game upon you:—but I have ways enough to be revenged; and, as you have been so very backward in discerning a lady's advances, I'll take care you shall be as slow in making your own: you have seized a strong post by surprise, but I have other defences in reserve; and, with my aunt Phœbe in front, I can still protract a surrender.

Blush. Whilst you look upon me with those eyes of love, I may defy your menaces, because I have your mercy to depend upon.

Lady P. Well, I protest you are insufferably vain.

Blush. And I swear you are insupportably handsome.

Lady P. Oh! then you are come down from your high-flown sentiment to a little plain sense at last: you have drawn off the angel, and the woman appears: I am very glad to find that I am not quite too good to be flattered.

Blush. My soul dotes on you: I adore you.

Lady P. Kneel, then, and worship at a distance.—I stand for privilege.—There lies your retreat; I keep this for my own.

Blush. Will you break parole with me? No, you have surrendered, and I'll carry off my prisoner, or perish.—Come with me, loveliest of women, come!

Lady P. I don't know that I dare; I shall grow afraid of you: I thought to stroke a lamb, and I have unchained a lion. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Mrs PHŒBE *and* O'FLAHERTY.

Phœ. There, there, there! did you see that, sir?

O'Fla. Oh! yes; mighty close truly, mighty close.

Phœ. As Mr Latimer's friend, methinks, you cann't be very well pleased with this discovery.

O'Fla. No indeed, and I am surprised to see you bear it so patiently; but you are of a sweet gentle nature, I perceive: and, as a reward for your patience, I can safely promise you shall hear no more of Blushenly after this night.

Phœ. How so, how so? Make me understand what you mean to do.

O'Fla. Never ask about it: never vex your lovely self—we have a way of our own in Ireland.

Phœ. Explain yourself, I conjure you.

O'Fla. Why, you know there is such a thing in the world as a post-chaise—Well!—and here you live upon the coast, hard by the sea, do you mind me?—Very well!—Mighty convenient, you'll allow, for shipping off contraband commodities, alias live-stock, for the continent.—Now if we can catch this young ram by the horns, and smuggle him into Dunkirk,

we shall stop his breed at home, and nobody the wiser.

Phæ. Horrible! would you take the young man out of the kingdom? would you murder him?

O'Fla. Why that shall be just as you like; it would make his voyage the shorter.

Phæ. Barbarian! I'll not suffer it: my blood chills with the idea.

O'Fla. Oh then take another recipe to warm it:—Elope with him yourself.

Phæ. Myself!

O'Fla. 'Tis done every day: the most effectual mode in nature to pique the jealousy of the young lady at home; she'll marry Latimer, out of revenge, in a week: the only thing is, to put a small force upon your modesty; if you have friendship enough for your niece to do this, all difficulties are over.

Phæ. Do you propose this in ridicule, or in insult to me?

O'Fla. Nay, if it shocks the delicacy of your nature, away with it at once; and, to say the truth, I was afraid your modesty could not put up with it.—What will become of her reputation? says I to Mr Latimer. Would you put a fair innocent creature side by side with a tempting young rogue in a close carriage; I'm ashamed of you, says I.—Oh! I rattled him off roundly for dreaming of it; for I was of your way of thinking, that it would be best to knock him on the head at once, and save mischief.

Phæ. Murder to save mischief!—Murder my reputation rather! inclose me in the odious post-chaise! let my innocence be your sacrifice, sooner than meditate an act so horrible: if no means else can be devised to separate him from Lady Paragon, behold me ready to devote myself a voluntary victim to preserve the honour and the interests of my family!

O'Fla. Why then, as I am a sinner, there is not a martyr in the calendar can go beyond you.—Oh,

sweet Phœbe; if you were of the right persuasion, you would be the first saint of your name!—Make up your mind, dear creature, for the journey: pack up a few trifles for your occasions by the way; put a good book in your pocket to keep the foul fiend at a distance;—for, mind what I tell you, there's no trusting to these close carriages: as for holding him in talk about the weather, and the prospects, and all that, don't depend upon it, for the night will be as dark as a hedge; then there's such a cracking and a rattling with your iron-work, screaming goes for nothing in an English post-chaise.

Phœ. Talk no more of such idle prospects; I have other resources than you know of; and shall take care to prevent mischief, both to him, to her, or myself. [*Exit.*

O'Fla. Mercy on men! what a fermentation does a little learning raise in a female scull! No wonder that our fortune-hunters poach among these petticoated pedants; they fall into the snare like a pheasant from its perch. [*Exit.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

Enter RUEFULL *and* DUMPS.

Rue. Get you gone, sirrah! I dismiss you from my service.

Dumps. Thank you heartily; 'tis the only kindness you ever did me.

Rue. Leave the room.

Dumps. To leave is to obey—to obey is to serve. You are no longer my master, therefore I do not leave the room.

Rue. Incomparable impudence! This is as it should be, it feeds my spleen, and serves to put me out of humour with the world.

Enter JACK HUSTINGS.

Jack. Who finds fault with the world?—I say 'tis a good world.

Rue. I never said it was not good enough for those who live in it.

Jack. Philosophers do but mar it.

Rue. Fox-hunters don't mend it.

Jack. You have a fellow here in your service of admirable humour.

Rue. He is an admirable fellow, if impudence be a recommendation.—I have done with him: he is upon his promotion; if you have a mind for a purchase, you have nothing to do but to outbid the gallows, and the lot is your own.

Dumps. Take me whilst you can have me, good sir! if you put it by till to-morrow, you will have to seek for me at the bottom of the moat;—I shall lay this old scare-crow of a livery on the bank for a mark: 'twill be in its seventh generation when I take leave of it, and every one of my predecessors left a family behind to be provided for;—give the devil his due, as the saying is, my master has some credit in this old coat; for 'tis made for all mankind; 'tis the only thing in our house that does not go by measure.

Jack. And can you find in your heart to part from this fellow?

Rue. Parting from Dumps is like the practice of repentance: it costs some struggle to wean one's self from one's vices.—Fare thee well, Dumps! I wish I were certain thou wouldst never come back to me;

for if thou dost, I shall surely take thee in, and 'twould be hard if the plague could be had above once in one's life. [*Exit.*

Jack. Well, Dumps, what are you pondering upon?

Dumps. A reprieve at the gallows is a very serious thing.

Jack. After all your changes in life, you have had one change for the better; I have no melancholy faces in my family.—You must have led the life of a dog in this old fellow's service.

Dumps. Bad enough! but if I had little food, I had less work; if I had no merriment, I had no care. A man may live in a prison till he likes it: when I was with my master, I pined for liberty; now I am loose, I long to go back again. In short, I don't know how it is: I had made up my mind, and, with your leave, I'll return to my execution.—You don't know that old gentleman's character, sir.

Jack. I know what he passes for in the world's opinion—a miser and a man-hater.

Dumps. Miser enough I own he is, and has gone near to starve me; but then he starves himself, so I cann't complain of him for that: a man-hater he is, I don't deny it; but then he does good to people out of spite.—He can be charitable enough, whilst other folks take the praise of it; find him out, and you are sure to lose his good-will.—He was a rake in his young days.

Jack. Was he so? pr'ythee, if thou canst, tell me something of his history.

Dumps. There's a lady of family (I don't know who she is) that he behaved very ill to: it lies on his conscience, and has turned his temper to vinegar:—she had a child by him—when he went abroad and left her;—he buried himself many years amongst the mountains, where the Swiss live, as I believe.

Jack. Is the child alive?

Dumps. I know nothing of that: so much I know, that he has been making inquiries since I have been with him, but all to no purpose, as far as I can find. He has a brave estate, and a fine house upon it, but he lives in a poor little cottage-like place, with an old woman and myself, and sees nobody. Folks think him a white-witch or wizard, and are afraid to come near him.

Jack. He seems to have taken strongly to our young man here.

Dumps. Mr Blushenly, you mean?

Jack. The same;—he is very earnest to promote a match between him and Lady Paragon.

Dumps. Is he so? why then you must excuse me, sir, I cannot think of leaving him: if he is Mr Blushenly's friend, I'll follow him whilst there is land or water to carry me; and so I will tell him:—here he comes.—*Peccavi, Domine!*—Master, forgive me!

Enter RUEFULL *and* SIR JEFFERY.

Rue. Get thee gone, blockhead, get thee gone!—I have no time to forgive thee.

Dumps. Rather say, you have no leisure to hold out.

Rue. I have better business to mind.

Dumps. 'Tis done with a word: pray, sir, be quick about it, for repentance comes but seldom, and 'tis not good manners to keep a stranger waiting.

Rue. Well, well, well! I will keep thee on, if it be only to torment thee; thy pardon shall be thy punishment.—Away with thee. [*Exit* DUMPS.

Sir Jef. Friend Jack, we are upon business.

Jack. A moment's patience!—Mr Ruefull, give me your hand; nay, good sir, give it me—I honour you from my soul:—I beg pardon for the false opinion I have had of you:—I am a country-bred fellow, 'tis true, but I have an honest heart, and a warm one—so Heaven bless you! that's enough. [*Exit.*

Rue. Ahem!—What's the matter with my eyes?—A plague upon the fellow, say I, for putting me in humour with mankind.—Go on with your story.

Sir Jef. I educated him in all points as my own son.

Rue. And at your own expence?

Sir Jef. No, I was privately supplied by his mother for that purpose.

Rue. Thank you, sir! thank you heartily for that; I should else have been compelled to confess it was a benevolent action.—And who is his mother?—Stop, though! if it is one of your secrets, keep it to yourself.

Sir Jef. It has been a secret, an inviolable secret, from the day of his birth to this hour:—it is now no longer so; for the death of his mother, who was a kinswoman of mine——

Rue. How's that? what do you say? a kinswoman of yours!

Sir Jef. A near one; my cousin, Frances Latimer——

Rue. Sir!

Sir Jef. What alarms you?

Rue. Is Blushenly the son of Mrs Fanny Latimer? are you sure of this? have you no trick in it?

Sir Jef. Trick! you may see her will.

Rue. Shew it to me.—Had she no other son, no other child but this? answer me this.

Sir Jef. No other child.—After putting him into my hands, she left England, shut herself into a convent at Lisle in Flanders, and led an exemplary life in retirement from the world, though she would never be induced to acknowledge her son, or discover his father.

Rue. Let me see the will, let me see the will.

Sir Jef. Come into my closet with me, and you shall see it.

Rue. Shew me the way.—Hey-day! what ails me?

how my head swims!—Give me your arm.—So, so! 'tis better.

Sir Jef. Bear up, my good friend; I see you are agitated by this discovery.

Rue. Do you think so? Cann't an old man be sick suddenly, but you must spy a mystery in it?—— Pshaw! [*Exeunt.*

Enter LADY PARAGON *and* BLUSHENLY.

Lady P. A situation of more hazard than mine could not well be; for I was courted by my admirers, and neglected by my husband. Oh, let no woman wed a gamester! human misery cannot exceed it.—And now, my dear Harry, that I have given you a portrait of myself, the best I can say for it is, that it is a faithful likeness; some faulty tints there may be, which the pencil of vanity has thrown in, but they will fly off in time; and I flatter myself it is no where dashed with the dark shades of guilt or deformity: as for the colours which love has given it, they will never fade in your keeping, for they are burnt in with fire, and can only perish with the piece itself. [*They embrace.*

Enter MRS PHŒBE LATIMER, *as they are embracing.*

Phœ. I can support this no longer.—Mr Blushenly, you are a traitor! Lady Paragon, you are—I won't say what—I renounce you!

Blush. Recollect yourself, madam! speak without passion, and I will answer you without reproach.

Phœ. No, sir, I will not speak without passion, nor will I enter upon any explanation with you.—There is a couching lion in your path, ready to spring upon you, and devour you both: an awful secret is in my keeping, nature extorts it from me; and before you rush into the crime of incest, know, young man—and tremble whilst I tell it—you are her father's son.—How now! have you no feeling of your

situation, that you receive it thus calmly? If you can doubt it, I'll produce my brother, and he shall confirm it to your faces.

Lady P. Stay, madam, if you please; there is no occasion to spread our family disgrace any further.

Phœ. How you both stand!—Lady Paragon, I'm astonished at your insensibility: you don't even change colour.

Lady P. That's much indeed; for I'm very apt to blush for those who assert a falsehood to my face.

Phœ. A falsehood! what do you insinuate?

Blush. Patience, I beseech you, and let us save you whilst we can.—Your zeal for Mr Latimer hurries you too far, when it puts you to invention and the abuse of truth.—In some degree I take the fault upon myself; for I could sooner have told you that his interest in this lady's affections stands on the security of honour, and does not want the aid of fiction —I am that happy man! I am that Latimer!

Phœ. You! you!

Blush. O'Flaherty brought the proofs; Sir Jeffery will impart them to you.

Phœ. Then I am ruined and undone!—I have exposed myself to shame and derision:—I am sinking with confusion!

Lady P. No, my dear aunt, you shall not sink; we are your friends, and we will hold you up.

Phœ. Impossible! I never can recall what I've said.

Blush. Nor shall you; for if time shall ever extinguish in your breast its partial affection for Blushenly, gratitude shall continue to record it in the heart of Latimer: therefore I pray you be at peace with yourself. What now is done, is done in secret; and whoever, in my hearing, dares to vent a sneer at the aunt of my Louisa, makes an enemy of me

Phœ. I thank you; you both are truly generous;

—but I am much agitated, and wish to retire to my chamber.

Lady P. No, no, persist, if it be possible!—My father will soon be here; meet him with congratulations; meet the whole family!—Look! here comes O'Flaherty.

Phw. The man of all the world I cannot meet; he knows my weakest thoughts: save me from this meeting, if you have pity for me.

Enter O'FLAHERTY, *and is met by* BLUSHENLY.

Blush. Stop, my good friend!—and, before a word can pass your lips, let me exact from you, as a soldier and a man of honour, to look at these ladies, and if there be here present one, to whose thoughts in some weak moment (for we all have such moments) you have been privy, bury them in generous silence for ever, and approve yourself deserving of the favours of the sex, by your gallantry in concealing their foibles!

O'Fla. I understand you, sir, perfectly; and when I pledge my honour, I pledge that which neither to man nor woman has been ever forfeited—so there's an end of the matter.——Now be so good as to say which name you are pleased to be called by, and whether I am to give you joy as Mr Latimer, or how much longer I am to keep it secret.

Blush. You are fairly released.

O'Fla. And does your ladyship bear in mind our wager?

Lady P. I acknowledge it lost, and will pay it the first moment I am able.

O'Fla. O dear heart alive! what a joy it is to hear you say so!—but there is a part at least, and the best part too, which you can always pay on demand.

Lady P. Well then, if you wish it, 'tis before you—serve yourself.

O'Fla. May the blessing of blessings light upon your generous heart! (*Salutes her respectfully.*) May the cheek which I have touched be unstained with a tear! And may your lips, which I had not the boldness to approach, be the sacred treasure of your husband!—Mrs Phœbe Latimer, I hope I shall not offend if I offer at the same presumption. Be confident, dear madam, that you have not in the world a more faithful humble servant than myself!

[*Aside to her.*

Phœ. I have entire reliance on your honour—I begin to feel the return of tranquillity.

Enter SIR JEFFERY LATIMER.

Lady P. Bless me, sir, what ails you? You alarm me.

Sir Jef. Tears of joy, tears of joy—don't be alarm'd—I am a father myself; the feelings of nature are very strong.

Blush. What are you speaking of?

Sir Jef. The surprise was sudden, and overpowered him; but we have fetched him to himself: Jack Hustings opened a vein—he can turn his hand to any thing. Here comes the good man!—Now let nobody be in a bustle; recollect yourself, Harry! Let nobody be in a bustle—Be as quiet and composed as I am.

RUEFULL *is led in between* JACK HUSTINGS *and* DUMPS, DAVID *attending behind with a chair.*

Rue. Put the chair in its place again! methinks you are very troublesome.—(DUMPS *puts a bottle of salts to his nose.*) What does the blockhead thrust his salts up my nostrils for? Keep 'em till my funeral; they'll serve to draw tears in your eyes.

Jack. How do you find yourself now, sir?

Rue. Exceedingly annoyed by your officiousness.—Who made you a surgeon, I would fain know?

Why am I to be blooded like a calf at the whim of a butcher?

Jack. You might have died, if we had not opened a vein.

Rue. Might have died!—well, and what might I do better? I have always reckoned upon one happy hour in life—the hour at the end of it.——Hark ye, Sir Jeffery, ask your daughter if she resolves upon marrying that young man by her side.

Sir Jef. Her heart is centered in that hope—I answer you in her own words.

Rue. Pray, madam, let me ask you why you make this choice?

Lady P. Because I know him, love him, and admire him; his honour, gentleness, modesty, and benevolence, endear him to me.

Rue. And is this a world for such a man to live in? With all these qualities, what sort of figure will he make in high life?

Lady P. I should be sorry if a man of your good sense gave into hackneyed invectives against high life; I suspect it is the vices of the vulgar which are precipitating this country to its grave!

Rue. It may be so; I stand corrected. But it is fitting you should know there is one objection to your future husband: he is the son of a humoursome, capricious old fellow, whom all the world sets down for a snarler and a miser.—I am his father.

Blush. Then nature is a faithful prophetess; I felt her at my heart.—Give me your blessing, sir!—My benefactor, friend, and father.

[*Throws himself on his knee.*

Rue. There, there! (*Blesses him.*)—I do these offices scurvily; a fellow of no feeling would make you a fine speech on the occasion.—I desire there may be no more said of the matter; it won't tell to my reputation—Old Jeffery knows all about it.—The world was a bad world, even in my young days, and I con-

tributed to make it worse: I used your mother like a rascal, the more shame for me! She never forgave it, and I never ceased repenting of it: if she would have told me where to find you, you should not have been so long without a father.

O'Fla. O *Jubilate!* what a hurricane of good luck has fallen upon us!—Hark ye, Mr Jack Hustings, you and I will make the corks crack for this.

Blush. Louisa, may I not present you to my father? [*Presents her.*

Rue. Happy be your lot, young lady! May the son repair the injuries of the father! and, by the honour of his conduct to your family, atone for the shame which mine has brought upon it!

Lady P. I am not the less confident of his conduct, when I find he is honourable and virtuous by inheritance.

Rue. I am only afraid he is too rich to be virtuous; if I was to consult his true interest, I should disinherit him.

Blush. Fear me not, sir, whilst there is an honest man in this company in want of that which we abound in.—Captain O'Flaherty, I hold myself accountable for Lady Paragon's debts; they are gaming debts indeed, but no less debts of honour: she has lost a wager to you of a wedding-favour—It is not very elegantly made up, but it is cordially bestowed—I hope you'll wear it for her sake.

[*Gives a paper folded up.*

Rue. Well said, boy! you are my own son:—you have put my money out to use already.

O'Fla. Out upon it! 'tis a subsidy for a German prince! I'll not touch a stiver of it. Zooks, man! I never wanted money, for I've always lived without it.

Lady P. Take it, however, if it be only to do honour to the friend that gives it.

Phœ. Let me join interest with my niece in the request: and now let's see if you dare to hold out against the petition of the ladies.

Sir Jef. Sister Phœbe! sister Phœbe! give me your hand—by the bones of the Latimers you are an honour to my family. Henceforward we strike up harmony and good fellowship for our lives.

Phœ. Let us all be friends, and all be happy!—Call in your neighbours, brother Jeffery, and let Merryfield-Hall blaze on this joyful occasion!—Mr Hastings, as you are looking out amongst the old and ugly for a partner, let the fiddles strike up, and you and I will join in the dance.

Jack. 'Tis a bargain! Now you are fair Phœbe again.—Away with all bickerings for ever! let those take them up that like 'em.—I should wish to know what punishment you could find in your heart to inflict, if I dared to repeat my offence in the face of this good campany.

Lady P. I'll answer you that question—Transportation for life.

Sir Jef. To the land of matrimony.

Jack. I am resigned to my fate—Let the law take its course!

Sir Jef. Get the warrants ready: here is double duty for the ordinary.

O'Fla. Ladies and gentlemen, a word with you before you are turned off—I hope I am not to be your executor, for I have enough already on my hands with these papers.—Will you be my banker, old gentleman? and lay out for a purchase of just such another little cot as your own; where, with a rood of potatoes in my front, and an acre of bog at my back, I can sit chirping like an old cricket in my chimney corner, and ruminate on the occurrences of this happy day. [*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

CARMELITE,

A

TRAGEDY.

IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.

BY

RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SAINT VALORI (the Carmelite,)	*Mr Smith.*
LORD HILDEBRAND,	*Mr Palmer.*
LORD DE COURCI,	*Mr Aickin.*
MONTGOMERI,	*Mr Kemble.*
GYFFORD.	*Mr Packer.*
FITZ-ALLAN,	*Mr Phillimore*
RAYMOND,	*Mr Faucett.*

MATILDA, (the Lady of St Valori,) *Mrs Siddons.*

Attendants, &c.

TIME, *that of the Representation.*

THE

CARMELITE.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

A rocky Shore, with a View of the Sea, at Break of Day.

FITZ-ALLAN *and* RAYMOND *meeting.*

Ray. Well met, Fitz-Allan; what's the time of day?

Fitz-Al. Broad morning by the hour.

Ray. Sleeps the sun yet?
Or has the stormy south, that howls so loud,
Blown out his untrimm'd lamp, and left us her
To be witch-ridden by this hag of Night,
Out of time's natural course?

Fitz-Al. Methinks the winds,
Which peal'd like thunder through Glendarlock's towers,
Have lower'd their note a pitch; the flecker'd clouds,
Lifting the misty curtain in the east,
Unmask the weeping day.

Enter MONTGOMERI *hastily.*

Mont. Oh, are you men?
Have you less mercy than the winds and waves,
That you stand here aloof?
Fitz-Al. Why, what has chanced?
Mont. A noble vessel breaks upon the rocks,
That jut from old Dunnose's rugged base;
And as the floating fragments drive ashore,
Our plundering islanders (convert their hearts,
Holy St Michael!) dash the drowning wretches
From the poor wreck they cling to, and engulph them
Quick in the boiling waves: by Heaven that made me,
I could forswear my nature, when I see
Man so degenerate!
Ray. Lo! we are ready:
Lead to the beach.
Mont. Alas! 'tis now too late:
I had not left it but that all was lost:
The element had mercy; man had none.
Two I have saved; the one a Carmelite,
Noble the other in his mien and habit;
I left them in the outskirts of the grove;
Let us go forth, my friends, and bring them in:
You to that quarter, I to this.—Away!
(*Exeunt severally.*

Enter LORD HILDEBRAND *and* SAINT VALORI.

St Val. Bear up, Lord Hildebrand! there's hope in view.
See'st thou yon turrets, that o'ertop the wood?
There we may shelter from the storm, and men
More merciless than rocks and winds, that wreck'd
Our strong-ribb'd galley in the foaming surge.
Ld Hild. I see the towers you point at, but I fear

My limbs will fail their burden ere we reach them.
Let me lie down beneath these oaks, and die.

St Val. If thus you shake with the soul's ague, fear,
Back to the sea, and seek the death you fled from;
Make not a coward's grave on English ground;
Your life is staked, your gauntlet is exchanged,
Each drop of blood about you is in pledge
You meet the champion of Saint Valori,
A lady's champion, in King Henry's lists:
There fight; or, if you needs must die, die there;
Fall, as a Norman knight shou'd fall, in arms.

Ld Hild. Father, your words accord not with your weeds.

St Val. Our ancestors were holy men, and they
Ordain'd the combat, as the test of truth;
Let them who made the law defend the law,
Our part is to obey it.—Hark! who comes?
The islanders will be upon us.—Stand!

Enter FITZ-ALLAN *and* RAYMOND.

Fitz-Al. What ho! Montgomeri!—the men are found.

St Val. Inhuman Englishmen! Will you destroy
Your brethren? We are Normans.—

Enter MONTGOMERI.

Mont. Ye are men,
Let that suffice; we are no savages.

St Val. 'Tis the brave youth who saved us.

Mont. Heaven hath saved you,
To Heav'n give thanks, O men redeem'd from death:
All else have perish'd!—'Tis a barbarous coast.

St Val. How is your island named?

Mont. The Isle of Wight.

St Val. Alas! that isle so fair should prove so fatal!

And you our benefactor, by what name
Shall we record you in our prayers?
Mont. I am call'd
Montgomeri.
St Val. 'Twill be our grateful office,
Generous Montgomeri, to make suit to Heaven
To bless, reward, and from distress like ours
Protect you ever.
Mont. Now declare thyself,
And this thy mournful friend, whom grief makes dumb,
Say who he is?
Ld Hild. A wretch without a name.
St Val. A gentleman of Normandy he is,
One who has seen good days.—'Tis now no time
To tell you further: he has wounds about him,
And bruises dealt him on the craggy beach,
That cry for charity.—Whose is that castle?
Mont. A lady's, whom we serve, of Norman birth.
St Val. Then lead us to her gates, for we are Normans:
Poor helpless men, fainting with want of food
And over-watching: tedious nights and days
We struggled with the storm: the greedy deep
Has swallow'd up our ship, our friends, our all,
And left us to your mercy. Sure your lady,
Who owns so fair a mansion, owns withal
A heart to give us welcome.—You are silent.
Fitz-Al. To save you, and supply your pressing wants
With food and raiment, and what else you need,
We promise, nothing doubting: more than this
Stands not within our privilege—no stranger
Enters her castle.
St Val. Wherefore this exclusion?
What can she fear from us

Fitz-Al. Ask not a reason;
We question not her orders, but obey them.
St Val. Then lay us down before her castle-gates,
And let us die: inhospitable gates!
Your roofs shall echo with our famish'd shrieks.—
A Norman she! impossible: our wolves
Have hearts more pityful.
Mont. Your saints in bliss,
Your calendar of martyrs does not own
A soul more pure, a virtue more sublime;
Her very name will strike defamers dumb.
St Val. Speak it.
Mont. Saint Valori.
St Val. Uphold me, Heaven!
The ways of Providence are full of wonder,
And all its works are mercy.—How now, sir!
Will you betray yourself? what shakes you thus?
Hild. I sicken at the heart: let me go hence,
And make myself a grave.
St Val. Be patient: stay!—
And hath your lady here consumed her youth
In pensive solitude? Twenty long years,
And still a widow!
Mont. Still a mournful widow.
St Val. Hath she such sorrows of her own, and yet
No heart to pity our's? It cannot be:
I'll not believe but she will take us in,
And comfort her poor countrymen.
Mont. Forbid it, Heaven,
That misery thus should plead, and no friend found
To speak in its behalf!—I'll move her for you.
St Val. The mother of our Lord reward you for it!
'Twill be a Christian deed.
Fitz-Al. Montgomeri, turn:
Have you your senses? the attempt is madness.

Ray. Where is the man, native or foreigner,
(Inmates excepted) ever pass'd her doors?—
Who dares to ask it?
Mont. I; Montgomeri.
Ray. So dare not I.
Fitz-Al. Nor I: success attend you!
But share the attempt I dare not—so farewell.
[*Exeunt.*
Mont. Farewell to both!—Strangers, be not dismay'd,
I'll soon return; the place will be your safeguard.
[*Exit* MONTGOMERI.
St Val. Lord Hildebrand, stand not aghast: you see
The youth is confident: look up and live!
Hild. By my soul's penitence, I'd rather die
Unpitied, starved, and to her castle dogs
Bequeath my untomb'd carcase, than receive
Life from her hands; the widow of Saint Valori!
That brave heroic champion of the cross,
Whom from the holy wars returning home,
Within the rugged Pyrenæan pass——
St Val. No more of that: I have your full confession;
You slew Saint Valori, and now his widow
Provokes you by her champion to defend
The rights you seiz'd, the title you inherit,
And hold by bloody charter.—What's your fear?
Saint Valori's dead; he cannot rise again,
And beard you in the lists.
Hild. Oh, that he could!
So I were not a murderer.
St Val. Grant you slew him,
Twenty long years have staunch'd the bleeding wound
Of him you slew, and laid his angry ghost.
Have you not rear'd his stately tomb, endow'd
The abbey of Saint Valori, and purchased

Perpetual masses to reclaim his soul
From purgatory's bondage? Have you faith
In absolution's power, and do you doubt
If yet atonement's made?

Hild. I do perceive
The hand of Heaven hangs over me and my house:
Why am I childless else? seven sons swept off
To their untimely graves; their wretched mother
By her own hand in raging phrenzy died;
And last behold me here, forlorn, abandon'd,
At life's last hour, before her surly gate,
Deaf to my hungry cries: and shall we rank
Such judgments in the casual course of things?
To me 'tis palpable that heavenly justice
Puts nature by, and to the swelling sum
Of my uncancell'd crimes adds all the lives
Of them who sunk this morning.

St Val. What knowest thou,
Blind or obdurate man? Shall we despond,
On whom the light of this deliverance shines?
No, let us boldly follow: there's a voice
Augurs within me wonderous things, and new,
Now on the moment's point: for of a certain
I know this lady shall set wide her gates
To give us joyful welcome: sable weeds
Shall turn to bridal robes, and joy shall ring
Through all her festive mansion, where of late
Deep groans and doleful lamentations howl'd.
Therefore no more; from my prophetic lips
Receive Heaven's mandate—and behold 'tis here!

Enter MONTGOMERI.

Mont. Health to your hopes, that were but now so sick!
Ye sons of sadness, cast off your despair;
Heaven has vouchsafed deliverance, and sends
Its angel messenger in person to you.

St Val. Then let me kneel, and hail the heavenly vision. [*Kneels.*

Enter the Lady of SAINT VALORI.

To Him, to Him alone, who by the hand
Leads his unseeing creatures through the vale
Of sorrow, to the day-spring of their hope,
Be praise and adoration!—A poor monk, (*Rising.*)
Who has trod many a weary league, as far
As there was Christian ground to carry him,
Asks for himself, and for this mournful man,
Newly escaped from shipwreck, food and rest,
Warmth, and the shelter of your peaceful roof.

Mat. Are ye of Normandy?

St Val. We are of Normandy:
But were we not your countrymen, distress
Like our's would make us so. Two of your servants
Spoke harshly, and had thrust us from your gates
But for this charitable youth.

Mat. Alas!
I am a helpless solitary woman,
A widow, who have lost—O God! O God!
'Twill turn my brain to speak of what I have lost:
It is amongst the lightest of my griefs
That I have lost myself.

St Val. Thyself!

Mat. My senses:
At best they are but half my own, sometimes
I am bereft of all. Therefore I lead
On this lone coast a melancholy life,
And shut my gate, but not my charity,
Against the stranger.

St Val. Oh, support me, Heaven,
Tis she, 'tis she! that woe-tuned voice is her's;
Those eyes that cast their pale and waning fires
With such a melting languor through my soul,
Those eyes are her's and sorrow's.—Heart, be still!
She speaks again.

Mat. You shall have food and clothing;
I'll bring you medicine for your bruised wounds.
What else you need, declare.
St Val. If I speak now,
She cannot bear it; it will turn her brain.
What shall I say?—We are your countrymen—
Oh my full heart! Oh anguish to dissemble!
Mat. Nay, if you weep—
St Val. Let us but touch your altar:
We are the sole sad relics of the wreck.
Let us but kneel and offer up one prayer
For our souls' peace, then turn us forth to die.
Mat. Mercy forbid it!—Oh, approach and enter.
If you can weep, we will converse whole days,
And speak no other language; we will sit,
Like fountain statues, face to face opposed,
And to each other tell our griefs and tears,
Yet neither utter word.—Pray you, pass on;
I had not been thus strict, but that I hear
Lord Hildebrand is on the seas: I hope
You are not of his friends.
Hild. Death to my heart!
O, father Carmelite, I must have leave—
St Val. On your salvation, peace!
Mat. What would he say?
St Val. His brain begins to turn: take him away.
I pray you lead him hence.
[MONTGOMERI *leads off* HILDEBRAND.
Mat. Alas! I pity him.
Why dost thou stay behind?—Whence that emotion?
What wouldst thou more?
St Val. I would invoke a blessing,
But that each sainted spirit in the skies
Will be thy better advocate.
Mat. Remember,
When you converse with Heaven, there is a wretch

Who will be glad of any good man's prayers.—
Farewell.
St Val. Oh, tell me, have you then endured
Twenty long years of mournful widowhood?
Mat. They say 'tis twenty years ago he died;
I cannot speak of time: it may be so;
Yet I should think 'twas yesterday.
St Val. I saw you—
Mat. You saw me! When?
St Val. When you did wed your lord.—
The paragon of all this world you was,
Grief has gone o'er you like a wintry cloud.—
You've heard this voice before.
Mat. I think I have:
It gives a painful sense of former days:
I've heard such voices in my dreams; sometimes
Conversed with them all night; but then they told me
My senses wander'd.—Pray you, do not harm me:
Leave me, good monk; indeed I know you not.
St Val. I wore no monkish cowl in that gay hour
When you wore bridal white. On Pagan ground,
Beneath the banner of the Christian Cross,
Faithful I fought; I was God's soldier then,
Though now his peaceful servant.
Mat. You have fought
Under the Christian Cross!—You shake my brain.
St Val. Peace to your thoughts! I will no farther move you:
Shall I not lead you hence?
Mat. Stand off, stand off!
The murderer of Saint Valori is abroad;
The bloody Hildebrand is on the seas.—
Rise, rise, ye waves! blow from all points, ye winds,
And whelm the accursed plank that wafts him over
In fathomless perdition!—Let him sink,
He and his hateful crew! let none escape,
Not one; or if one, let him only breathe

To tell his tale, and die!—Away! begone
You've made me mad.
St. Val. I was Saint Valori's friend:
He never yet bled with the battle's wound,
But I shed drop for drop: when o'er the sands
Of sultry Palestine with panting heart
He march'd, my panting heart with his kept time,
And number'd throb for throb.
Mat. Where are my people?
What ho! Montgomeri! Lead, lead me hence.

Enter MONTGOMERI *hastily, with* GYFFORD.

Give me thine arm! support me! Oh, 'tis well,
To horse, to horse!—I have a champion now,
Whose hand, heart, soul are mine, and mine are his;
One who has valour to assert my cause,
And worth to wear the honours he defends.
Mont. What hast thou done, old man?
Gyf. Stay not to question;
Look to the lady: leave the monk with me.
Mat. Come let us hence; I do not live without thee. [*Exit with* MONT.
St Val. Amazement!—Speak, what kindred, what affection,
What passion binds her to that youth?—Resolve me,
Who and what is he?
Gyf. You are curious, father.
Who he may be I know not; what he was
I well remember.
St Val. What was he?
Gyf. Her page;
A menial thing, no better than myself.
St Val. Heavens! can it be? Will she so far descend
From her great name, to wanton with her page?
Saw you the look she gave him?
Gyf. I did see it.

St Val. It seemed as though his eyes had magic in them,
That charm'd away her madness.—Hah! you sigh:
What means that pensive movement of your head?
Answer!

Gyf. Good father, question me no more.
Fortune can level all things in this world,
Pull down the mighty and exalt the mean:
But you and I methinks have outlived wonders.—
Now to the castle! Shut both ears and eyes:
Hear without noting; see, but not observe.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in MATILDA'S *Castle.*

Enter SAINT VALORI *and* GYFFORD.

Gyf. With awful wonder I survey and hear you,
Whilst through the veil of that disguiseful habit,
Through all the changes time and toil have wrought
In that once-noble visage, I scarce trace
The lineaments of my most honour'd lord.

St Val. Awake from this surprise, and hear me, Gyfford.
I am no spectre, but thy living master:
Wounded and breathless on the ground I lay,
Welt'ring in blood; the assassins fled and left me;

There I had soon expired, but that a company
Of merchants journeying from Venice found me,
And charitably staunch'd my bleeding wounds.
To their own homes they bore me: heal'd, restored,
In a Venetian galley I embarked,
And sail'd for Genoa; but, ere we reach'd
Our destined port, a Saracen assail'd
And master'd our weak crew.—To tell the tale
Of my captivity, escape, return,
Would ask more leisure, and a mind at ease.

Gyf. But why does brave Saint Valori appear
A bearded Carmelite?

St Val. This holy habit
Through a long course of dangerous pilgrimage
Has been my saving passport: thus attired
I reach'd my native castle, found it lorded
By the usurper Hildebrand; with zeal
I burn'd to call my faithful people round me,
And throw off my disguise; this I had done,
But strait arrived a herald from King Henry
To warn him to the lists against the champion
Of my supposed widow: the pale coward
Shrunk, yet obey'd the summons. The thought struck me
To join his train, and in my sovereign's presence
At the last trumpet's signal to come forth
Before the king, the lords and armed knights,
And strike confusion to the caitiff's soul.—
The rest needs no relation.

Gyf. 'Tis resolved
To-morrow for Southampton we depart;
There Henry keeps his court.

St Val. Why then, to-morrow
Truth and the morning-sun shall rise together,
And this black night of doubt shall be dispell'd:
Till then lock fast my secret in thy heart,
And know me for none other than I seem.
Lo, where they come! Yet, yet I will be patient;

Time will bring all things forth.—Gyfford, withdraw. [*Exeunt.*

Enter MATILDA *and* MONTGOMERI.

Mat. I think he said he was my husband's friend;
If so, I've been too harsh; reason forsook me,
For he did speak of things that rent my heart:
But let that pass.—Dost thou observe, Montgomeri?

Mont. With fix'd attention and devoted heart
I hear, and note your pleasure.

Mat. I am calm,
Thou seest I am, and not about to speak,
As sometimes, when my thoughts obey no order:
Therefore I pray thee mark.—Thou must have noted
With what a tenderness I've train'd thee up
From helpless infancy to blooming manhood:
Hast thou not noted this?

Mont. I were most vile
Did I forget it.

Mat. I am sure thou dost not;
For from the moment of thy birth till now
I've nursed thy opening virtues, mark'd their growth,
And glory'd in the fruit of my adoption:
I've register'd each movement of thy soul,
And find it tuned to honour's loftiest pitch,
To soft affection modell'd, and to love,
The harmony of nature: my best hopes
Are satisfied, and thou art all I pray'd for.

Mont. What thou hast made me that I truly am,
And will be ever: hands, head, heart are your's.

Mat. The day is coming on, the wished-for day
(After a night of twice ten tedious years)
At length is coming on: justice is granted;
I go to Henry's court; Lord Hildebrand
Is summon'd to the lists: and where's the man
To avenge the widow's cause?

Mont. Where is the man!
And can you want a champion?—Have I lived

The creature of your care, the orphan child
Of your adopting charity, the thing
Your plastic bounty fashion'd from the dust
Of abject misery; and does my heart
Utter one drop of blood that is not your's,
One artery that does not beat for you?
Mat. Know, then, I have a champion, noble, brave,
Heir of the great Saint Valori, my son
Mont. What do I hear? thy son!—Where has he lived,
That I have never seen him? never known
There was a living hero of the name?
Oh, tell me where he is, that I may fly
To do him faithful service, on my knee
Brace on his glittering armour, bear his shield,
The glorious badge of his nobility,
And shout with triumph when his conquering sword
Cleaves the assassin's crest.—Oh send me hence,
To hail his victory, or share his fall!
Mat. Thou art my son.
Mont. Merciful God! thy son!
Mat. Thou art my son; for thee alone I've lived,
For thee I have survived a murder'd husband;
For thee—but it would break thy filial heart
To hear what I have suffer'd; madness seiz'd me,
And many a time (sweet Jesus intercede,
For I was not myself!) yes, many a time
In my soul's anguish, with my desperate hand
Raised for the stroke of death, a thought, a glance
Of thee, my child, has smote my shatter'd brain,
And stopt the impending blow.
Mont. Oh, spare thyself,
Spare me the dread description!
Mat. Thou hast been
Thy mother's guardian angel: furious once,
In the mind's fever, to Glendarlock's roof
Mad'ning I rushed; there, from the giddy edge
Of the projecting battlements, below,

Measuring the fearful leap, I cast my eye:
Thy cherub form arrested it; my child
Upon the pavement underneath my feet
Sported with infant playfulness; my blood
Drove back upon my heart: suspended, poised,
High hung in air, with outstretch'd arms I stood,
Pondering the dreadful deed; thy fate prevail'd,
Nature flew up, and push'd me from the brink—
I shrunk, recoil'd, and started into reason.

Mont. Oh terrible to thought! Oh pictured horror!
It pierces to my brain; there's madness in it!

Mat. Yes, sorrow had o'erturn'd thy mother's brain:
I have been mad, my son; and oftentimes
I find, alas! all is not yet composed,
Sound and at peace: it takes a world of time
To heal the wounds of reason; even now,
When I would fain relate my life's sad story,
I cannot range my scatter'd thoughts in order
To tell it as I should.—I pray thee pardon me;
I'll do my best to recollect myself,
If thou'lt be patient.

Mont, Patient! Oh, thou sufferer!
Oh, thou maternal softness! hear thy son,
Thus kneeling, bathing with his tears thy feet,
Swear to cast off each fond alluring thought,
The world, its honours, pleasures, and ambition;
Here in this solitude to live with thee,
To thee alone devoted!

Mat. No, my son:
Though in this solitude I have conceal'd thee,
Even from thyself conceal'd thee, to evade
A fell usurper's search, and stemm'd the tide
Of nature, gushing to a mother's heart;
Still I have done it in the sacred hope
Of some auspicious hour, when I might shew thee
Bright as thy father's fame.

Mont. I own the cause,
And know how watchfully this hungry vulture
Has hover'd o'er thee on his felon wings.
Now I can solve this solitude around us,
Why thou hast built thine airey in this cragg,
And with a mother's care conceal'd thy young.
Mat. Another day, and then—meanwhile be cret;
Discovery now would but disturb the house
From its sobriety, and mar the time
Of awful preparation.—Pass to-morrow!—
(Oh, all ye saints and angels, make it happy!)
Then, if thou comest a living conquerer home,
This roof, that still has echo'd to my groans,
Shall ring with triumphs to Saint Valori's name:
But if——
Mont. Avert the sad, ill-omen'd word!
Thou shalt not name it: my great father's spirit
Swells in my bosom.—When my falchion gleams,
When the red cross darts terror from my shield,
The coward's heart shall quail, and Heaven's own arm,
Ere mine can strike, shall lay the murderer low.
Mat. Thy father stirs within thee: hark! methinks
I hear the shrieks of his unburied ghost,
Screaming for vengeance.—Oh, support, defend me!
See where he gleams, he bursts upon my sight!
'Tis he! 'tis he! I clasp him to my heart;
My hero! my Saint Valori! my husband!
[*Embraces him.*

Enter GYFFORD *unseen; starts.*

Gyf. Husband! oh fatal word! undone for ever!
Mat. I will array thee in a sacred suit,
The very armour my Saint Valori wore,
When in the single combat he unhorsed
And slew the Lord Fitz-Osborn. On that helm

High-plumed Victory again shall stand,
And clap her wings exulting; from that shield
Vengeance with gorgon terrors shall look forth,
Awfully frowning.—Hah! what man art thou?
[*Discovering* GYFFORD.
Gyfford, what would'st thou? wherefore this intrusion?

Gyf. A noble messenger from Henry's court
Is landed on the isle.

Mat. From the king, sayest thou?

Gyf. A runner of his train, whose utmost speed
Scarce distanced him an hour, is now arrived,
And gives this warning.

Mat. Did you not enquire
His master's name and title?

Gyf. Lord De Courci.

Mat. A generous and right noble lord he is:
Our Normandy boasts not a worthier baron,
Nor one affianced to our house more kindly:
Prepare to give him welcome.—Follow me.
[*Exit with* MONT.

Gyf. Yes, to destruction, for that way thou leadest.
Husband!—her husband! her Saint Valori!
It cannot be.—Without the church's rites
Wed him she could not; to conceal those rites,
And wed by stealth, is here impossible.
What must I think?—That he is yet her husband
In meditation only, not in form.
Embracing too!—Oh mortal stab to honour!
O shame, shame, shame! that I should live to see it!

Enter SAINT VALORI *hastily.*

St Val. What hast thou seen? my mind is on the rack;
Thou'st been in conference with thy lady; speak!—
If thou hast aught discovered that affects
My honour, tell it.

Gyf. Hard task you enjoin;

Would rather I were in my grave, than living
To utter what I've seen.
St Val. Nay, no evasion.
Gyf. For the world's worth I would not with my knowledge
Add or diminish of the truth one tittle.
St Val. Gyfford, as thou shalt render up the truth
To the great Judge of hearts, say what thou knowest
Of my unhappy wife; nor more nor less,
Give me the proof unvarnished.
Gyf. I surprised
Her and Montgomeri heart to heart embracing—
St Val. Death! Heart to heart embracing!—Woman, woman!
Gyf. Fond and entranced within his arms she lay;
Then with uplifted rapturous eyes exclaimed,
"My hero! my Saint Valori! my husband!"
St Val. Husband! reflect.—Art sure she called him husband?
Gyf. If there be faith in man, I've spoke the truth.
St Val. Why then the truth is out, and all is past:
I have no more to ask.
Gyf. Hear me with favour:
I'll not abuse the licence of old age
And faithful service with too many words.
St Val. What canst thou tell me?—I have one within
That is my monitor: not unprepared
I meet this fatal stroke, nor with revilings
Or impious curses (be my witness, Gyfford!)
Do I profane Heaven's ear, though hard and painful
This bitter visitation of its wrath.
Gyf. Though to the sure conviction of my senses
I saw and heard what I have now reported,
Yet, circumstances weighed, I must believe
As yet she is not wedded.
St Val. Hah! not wedded?

Perish the man who dares to breathe a doubt
Of her unspotted chastity: not wedded!
Yet heart to heart embracing! dreadful thought!—
Death in his direst shape approach me rather
Than that dishonest doubt!
Gyf. Would I had died
Ere I had seen this day!
St Val. Wretch that I am,
Why was I snatch'd from slaughter? why deliver'd
From barbarous infidels? why, when overwhelm'd
And sinking in the oblivious deep, preserved,
Washed like a floating fragment to the shore,
Saved, nourish'd, ransomed by the very hand
That cuts my heart asunder; set in view
Of all my soul held dear; and now, even now,
As I reach forth my hand to seize the goal,
The resting-place and haven of my hope,
Dash'd in a moment back, and lost for ever
Gyf. Such is the will of Heaven! For me, thus old
And blighted with misfortune, I've no strength,
No root to bear against this second storm;
There, where I fall, I'll make myself a grave.
St Val. No more of this: you've heard my last complaint;
For I must soon put off these monkish weeds,
And what a consecrated knight should do,
Fitting the cross he wears, that must be done.—
How stands your preparation for to-morrow?
Will she depart?
Gyf. I think she will; for now
The Lord De Courci, from King Henry sent,
Bears courtly salutation to your lady,
With formal summons to her challenger.
St Val. If it be that De Courci who was once
My youth's companion, and my bosom friend,
A more accomplish'd knight ne'er carried arms:
His coming is most timely.—Tell me, Gyfford,

Rememberest thou the armour which I wore
When in the lists I combated Fitz-Osborn?—
I gave it to my wife.
Gyf. I well remember.
St Val. And hath she kept it, think'st thou?
Gyf. She hath kept it.
St Val. 'Tis well; for that's the suit, the very suit,
Which I must wear to-morrow.
Gyf. Ah, my Lord!
She hath bestow'd that armour on her champion;
And young Montgomeri with to-morrow's dawn
Starts, like another Phæton, array'd
In substituted splendour: on his arm
He bears the shield of great Saint Valori,
A golden branch of palm, with this device,
"Another, and the same!"—'Twill be a pageant,
Glittering as vanity and love can make it.
St Val. Mournful as death.—My armour will she take?
My shield, my banners, to array her champion?
Let them beware how they divide the spoil
Before the lion's kill'd.—Oh, fall of virtue!
Oh, all ye matron powers of modesty!
How time's revolving wheel wears down the edge
Of sharp affliction! Widows' sable weeds
Soon turn to grey; drop a few tears upon them,
And dusky grey is blanch'd to bridal white;
Then comes the sun, shines through the drizzling shower,
And the gay rainbow glows in all its colours.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Castle.

Enter LORD HILDEBRAND *and* SAINT VALORI.

Hild. Ah, father Carmelite! where hast thou been?
Was it well done to leave thy wretched friend
To be devour'd by heart-consuming anguish?
St Val. I left you to repose.
Hild. I know it not:
Sleep is my horror; then the furies rise;
Then pale Saint Valori appears before me:
Trembling I wake, cold damps bedew my limbs,
And my couch floats with tears.—Is this repose?
St Val. No; yet it moves my wonder why your conscience,
Mute for so many years, should on the sudden
Break into voice, and cry so loud against you.—
I found you lull'd in a luxurious calm,
Feasting upon the spoils of him you stabb'd;
Your castle flow'd with revelry and wine,
And you the loudest of the sons of riot:
Where was your conscience then?
Hild. With you it came;
You are the father of my soul's repentance:
Your fascinating eye pervades my breast;
Conscious, abash'd, uncover'd to the heart,
I stand before you—to your ear confide
Things unreveal'd to man. Now, as I see you,

Though in Religion's peaceful garment clothed,
Saint Valori methinks appears before me,
Dreadful in arms, and braves me to the lists.
St Val. Take food and rest, recruit your body's strength,
And you'll forget these fears.
Hild. I'll die with famine
Before I'll eat the charitable bread
Of her I made a widow; and for sleep,
I tell thee once again sleep is my horror.
Methought but now by shipwreck I was plunged
Into the foaming ocean; on the shore
Your figure stood with beckoning hand outstretch'd
To snatch me from the waves; chear'd with the sight,
Through the white surf I struggled; with strong arm
You raised me from the gulph; joyful I ran
To embrace my kind preserver—when at once
Off fell your habit, bright in arms you stood,
And with a voice of thunder cried aloud,
"Villain, avaunt! I am Saint Valori!"—
Then push'd me from the cliff: down, down I fell,
Fathoms on fathoms deep, and sunk for ever!
St Val. This was your dream.
Hild. Now hear my waking terrors.—
Roused by this dream, I started; to the wall
Furious I rush'd, to dash my desperate brains:
Burst with the force, a secret door flew open,
Where full in view a lighted altar blazed
With holy tapers bright; around it hung
The funeral trophies of Saint Valori;
Red gleam'd the banner of the bloody Cross,
And on a table underneath was written,
"Pray for the peace of his departed soul!"
Upon my knees I dropt, and would have pray'd,
When soon, behold! the lady widow enter'd,
Led by the generous youth who saved our lives:
I rose, made low obeisance, and retired.

St Val. You left them there.—Did all this pass in silence?

Hild. All; not a word was spoken.

St Val. Did you note
Her look, her action?—How did she dismiss you?
Abruptly, eagerly?

Hild. With matron grace,
Her hand thus gently waving, she dismiss'd me;
The other hand most lovingly was lock'd
In his on whom she lean'd.

St Val. No more of this.
Hark! you are summon'd—Rouse from this despair;
Shake off your lethargy! [*Trumpet.*

Hild. What trumpet's that?

St Val. To you, or to your challenger, the last;
Death sounds the knell, and justice seals the doom.

Hild. My soul sinks down abash'd: I cannot fight;
What would you more? I have confest the murder.

St Val. You have confest you know not what: retire!
Go to your chamber; I will quickly follow,
And bring you comfort.—Nay, make no reply.
The time is labouring, wonderous things and new
Press to the birth; prepare yourself to meet them.
[*Exeunt severally.*

Enter MATILDA *and her Domestics,* DE COURCI *and his Train.*

Mat. My noble lord, thrice welcome! you are come
To glad the mourner's heart, and with your presence
Make her poor cottage rich.

De Cour. Most noble lady,
Henry of Normandy, the kingly heir
Of England's mighty conqueror, of his grace
And princely courtesy, by me his servant,
As a most loving father, kindly greets you:
Which salutation past, I am to move you

Upon the matter of your suit afresh,
Its weight and circumstance; how many years
It hath been let to sleep; what forfeiture
And high default you stand in, should it fail:
Conjuring you, as fits a Christian king,
By the loved memory of your honour'd lord
Who now hath tenanted the silent grave
These twenty years and more, not to proceed
In this high matter on surmise, or charge
Of doubtful circumstance; the crime alledged
Being so heinous, the appeal so bloody,
And he whom you attaint so brave and noble.

Mat. I know, my lord, in property the law
Can plead prescription and the time's delay;
But justice, in an inquisition made for blood,
With retrospective eye through ages past
Moves her own pace, nor hears the law's demur.—
Why I have let this murder sleep thus long,
Necessity, and not my will, must answer.
The conqueror William, and his furious son,
With iron hand upheld the oppressor's power,
And stopt their ears against the widow's cries.
In painful silence brooding o'er my grief,
On this lone rock, upon the ocean's brink,
Year after year I languish'd, in my dreams
Conversing oft with shadowy shapes and horrors,
That scared me into madness.—Oh, my lord!
Bear with my weakness: pray regard me not;
I have a remedy at hand—my tears. [*Weeps.*

De Cour. Sad relict of the bravest, best of men,
Tell not thy griefs to me, nor let my words
(Which by commission, not of choice, I speak)
Shake thy firm purpose; for on England's throne
No tyrant sits, deaf to the widow's cause,
But Heaven's vicegerent, merciful and just.
If stedfast thou art fix'd in thy appeal,
Stedfast in justice is thy sovereign too.

Bring forth thy knight appellant, for the lists
Expect him, and may Heaven defend the right!

Mat. Thanks to thy royal sender! on my knee
I offer prayers to Heaven for length of days,
And blessings shower'd on his anointed head.—
Now, gallant lord, you shall behold my champion,
My shepherd boy, who, like the son of Jesse,
Unskill'd in arms, must combat this Philistine.—
Montgomeri, come forth!

Enter MONTGOMERI.

De Cour. Is this your knight?

Mat. This is my knight. I trust not in the strength
Of mortal man; Heaven will uphold my cause,
And to a murderer's heart will guide the blow,
Though from an infant's hand.

De Cour. Of what degree
Must I report him? In the royal lists,
Against so proud a name as Hildebrand,
The warlike forms of knighthood will demand
That noble shall to noble be opposed.

Mat. Not unprepared I shall attend the lists,
And at my sovereign's feet prefer the proofs
Which honour's forms demand.

De Cour. You know the peril
If you fall short.

Mat. I take it on my head.

De Cour. Where have you served? What battles have you seen?

Mont. Few and unfortunate have been the fields
Where I have fought.—I served a sinking cause;
Robert of Normandy was my liege Lord,
For I am Norman born.

De Cour. Have you been train'd
In tournaments?

Mont. I never broke a lance,
Nor shall I, as I hope, but in his heart
Who stabb'd Saint Valori.

De Cour. Noble lady,
I would impart something of nearest import
To your more private ear.
Mat. Let all withdraw: [*They withdraw.*
Leave us.—And now, my lord and honour'd guest,
Impart your noble thoughts; for sure I am
None others can be native of a soul,
Where courtesy and valour are enshrined,
As in a holy altar, under guard
Of consecrated keepers—therefore speak.
De Cour. Let infamy fix on me, when I wrong
A confidence so generous!—Heaven bestow'd
One friend, the pride and blessing of my life;
Heaven, when you lost a husband, from me also
Took that one friend away, and in his grave
Buried my heart beside him.
Mat. Yes, my lord,
We both have cause to mourn him: I remember
The day he parted for the Holy Wars,
His manly bosom struggling to repress
Its bursting passion, in those racking moments,
When stern religion rent him from my arms,
Then, even then, in his capacious soul
Friendship had part—you shared it with Matilda.
Need I proceed? ah, no! for you was present,
You took him from me, on your neck he fell;—
I parted, sunk, and never saw him more.
De Cour. 'Twas in those parting moments he committed
A sacred charge, the very test of friendship,
Your soft unsheltered beauty, to my care.
I served, consoled you, loved you as a brother;
But soon Saint Valori call'd me from my charge,
For war and sickness had consumed our host,
And Palestine was drench'd with Christian blood.—
We fought, we conquer'd, and from Pagan hands
Rescued the captive Cross: and now command
My zealous heart, you are its mistress still.

Mat. There needs not this, my lord; for I can read
Your zeal without a preface: freely then,
As a friend should, and plainly speak your thoughts.
De Cour. When rumour of this combat reach'd my ears,
Without delay I sent a trusty page,
Offering myself as your devoted knight:
He brought for answer, that you had a champion,
You thank'd me for my offer;—cold repulse
Temper'd in courteous phrase! still I submitted
In silence as became me, to your pleasure,
Musing who this might be——
Mat. And now you find him
A stripling youth unknown, in arms a novice,
And you condemn my choice; these are your thoughts.
De Cour. I do confess it.—Oh, reflect in time!
Think not because nature has cast a form
In fair proportion, strung his youthful joints
With nerves that bear him bounding to the chace,
Or hurl the wrestler in the shouting ring,
That you have trained a champion to encounter
A combatant so practised in the lists,
So valorous in fight as Hildebrand.
Mat. What I have done, I've done: your zeal, my lord,
May start new terrors for my hero's danger,
Shake me with new alarms, but change it cannot.
De Cour. Turn not away, but still with patience hear me.
Think what you are, great in yourself, yet greater
As brave Saint Valori's widow: Oh preserve
That name untainted; hear what honour counsels;
Truth makes me bold, your danger is my warrant.
Mat. You was my husband's friend; I own your plea.
Lo! I am turn'd to hear: proceed.
De Cour. I was his friend,

I am your's also; and as such I warn you
Against a deed so fatal, that the steel
Of Hildebrand gave not a stab more mortal
To life than this to fame.

Mat. My lord, my lord!
You rise too fast upon me, and advance
Too strongly on so weak a disputant,
So much to seek for reason as I am.

De Cour. May I not then demand, what is this boy,
Whom you thus dignify? this page, this lacquey,
The very topmost pitch of whose promotion
Had been to touch the stirrup of Saint Valori?

Mat. What is he!—but you question me too harshly—
I'll answer to the king; but to a friend
Who treats me with suspicion, I am silent.
You bid me call to memory what I am:
I hope when thus you school me, you yourself
In your own precepts need no monitor.
I think I am as humble as I should be
Under such hard correction. I acknowledge
Two powerful duties: to my husband one,
The first and strongest; to yourself the next,
As my much honour'd guest; but I oppose
The tyranny of friendship, which would stamp
Dishonour on the worthy, and forbid
My free affections to direct their choice
Where nature warrants, and my soul approves.

[*Exit.*

De Cour. (*Alone.*) Why then there's no perfection in the sex,
Or I had found it here. Farewell to grief;
So much for tears! though twenty years they flow,
They wear no channels in a widow's cheeks;
And still the ambush'd smile lurks underneath
The watery surface, ready to start up

At the next lover's summons; now to greet
A hero's passion, now to wed a page.

Enter SAINT VALORI.

St Val. My Lord De Courci, doth your memory serve
To recollect a certain pledge of love,
A jewel, which the lady of this house
Gave to her husband by your hands?

De Cour. A bracelet;
She took it from her arm when they did part:
I well remember it.

St Val. Was it like this?

De Cour. The very same; I gave it to Saint Valori,
When he embark'd for Palestine.

St Val. You did:
I had it then; your memory is perfect.

De Cour. You had it then!—What must I think of this?

St Val. Can you this little token keep in mind,
And not remember him you gave it to?

De Cour. Explain yourself; you speak in mysteries.

St Val. Be temperate then; let not your loud surprise
Betray me to the house: I'm here unknown.

De Cour. Impossible! though the dead rose again,
Yet this can not be he.

St Val. My friend! my friend!
Come to my arms! let this embrace convince you.

De Cour. Oh, earth and heaven! he lives.

St Val. He lives indeed
To a new life of misery. Be still!
Forbear to question me: another time
Thou shalt hear all, but let this hour be sacred
To friendship's pressing call.—My wife! my wife!

De Cour. Oh, my prophetic fears!

St Val. Unhappy woman!

For why should I accuse her? twenty years
A mournful widow, and at last to start
So wide from all propriety; and now,
After so brave a struggle, now to sink
Her honour, which still bore so proud a sail
Through the rough tide of time: oh bitter thought!
Oh aggravating shame!
De Cour. Alas, my friend,
How shall I comfort you? I see you point
At young Montgomeri: in friendship's right
I ask'd her private ear, and boldly urged
The peril of her fame.
St Val. And what reply?
De Cour. Patient at first she heard; but when I touch'd
The master-string, and set to view how base
The choice of such a minion, such a page,
Then—but 'twere painful to describe the scene,
Vain to conceal: she loves him to distraction.
St Val. Can it be doubted? She has married him.
De Cour. Indeed!
St Val. I have a trusty servant here,
Who saw her clasp him in her wanton arms,
Twine, like pale ivy round the polish'd bark
Of the smooth beech, whilst rapt'rous she exclaim'd,
"My hero! my Saint Valori! my husband!"—
Oh, she is lost, beyond redemption lost!
De Cour. Who now shall dream of constancy in woman?
What's to be done? Your life dissolves the combat.
St Val. That shame I've saved her from: Lord Hildebrand
Is dying in this house.
De Cour. Lord Hildebrand!
How many strange events are here combined
Of sorrow and surprise! so thick they crowd,
So swift they change, I know not where to turn,
Nor what to counsel.

St Val. What can counsel give?
Can words revoke, can wisdom reconcile,
The indissoluble web which fate has wove?
And shall I stay and harbour here with shame?
Walk, like a discontented moping ghost,
To haunt and hover round their nuptial bed,
When I can die, as I have lived, in arms?—
Off, holy counterfeit! begone, disguise!

De Cour. Stop, I conjure you: rush not on despair.

St Val. Despair!—And have I worn the Cross so long,
But as the mask and mockery of religion?
No, 'tis the armour of a Christian knight,
And with this gauntlet I defy despair.

De Cour. Then by that sacred symbol, by our friendship
And faithful brotherhood in God's holy service,
I do beseech thee to persist in hope:
For whilst one circumstance of doubt remains,
One, though the slightest fragment is afloat,
That fond credulity e'er clung to, still,
Still will I keep some happy chance in view
To save thy lady's honour.

St Val. Gallant friend,
Thy counsel shall prevail, I will persist;
And as misfortune is the world's best school
For true philosophy, I will extract
The cordial patience from the bitter root
Of this implanted pain. Come, brave De Courci!
Pleasure's gay scene, and hope's delusive dream,
Are vanish'd, lost; love's fairy palace sinks
In the false fleeting sand on which 'twas built;
Whilst thy immortal constancy alone
Stands in the waste, a solitary column,
To tell life's mournful traveller where once
Joy revell'd, and a stately fabric rose.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

Enter MATILDA *and* LORD HILDEBRAND.

Mat. Stop, stranger! wherefore have you left your chamber?
Will you go forth with all your wounds about you?
Return, nor rashly counteract our care,
That labours to preserve you.
Hild. Shall I make
Your house a grave? The wounds you see are nothing,
Their pain may be assuaged by drugs and ointments;
Nature abounds in simples, that can heal
These tumours of the body.
Mat. If the cure
Be, as you say, so easy, why oppose it?
Is pain your choice, that you resist our medicines,
And thus expose your rankling wounds undrest
To the raw festering air?
Hild. Ah, generous lady!
'Tis but a superficial flattering art
To heal the skin, and make the surface whole,
When an unsearchable and mortal sting
Has pierced the nobler part.
Mat. That sting is grief:
You mourn a wife, perhaps, or some dear friend,
In your late shipwreck lost: if it be so,
I'll not arraign your sorrow; yet remember,
Though short of their allotted time they fell,
'Twas Heaven that struck them short; they were not murder'd,

As my Saint Valori, by vile treach'rous man.
Hild. Oh, horror! horror!
Mat. Have I touch'd the cause?
Was there a friend? a wife?
Hild. Nor wife, nor friend:
And yet——
Mat. What yet? Your heart perhaps was fix'd
Upon your freighted treasures, hoarded up
By carking care, and a long life of thrift,
Now without interest or redemption swallow'd
By the devouring bankrupt waves for ever:
What then? your cares have perish'd with your fortune.
Hild. The wreck of friends and fortune I bewail
As things Heaven gives and takes away at pleasure;
Conditional enjoyments, transient loans,
Bliss that accumulates a debt of pain:
Swift their succession, sudden their reverse.
To-day the setting sun descends in tears,
To-morrow's dawn breaks forth, and all is joy:
But guilt involves me in perpetual night;
No morning star, no glimmering ray of hope;
Eternal tossings on a bed of thorns,
Conscience, that raven, knelling in my ear,
And vulture furies plucking at my heart!
Mat. Then I conjectured right, and 'tis remorse
Which tortures you; I read it in your eyes.
Did that descending virtue come on earth,
To set at large the captive or the free?
'Twas to redeem the captive: Turn to him,
Turn then, and seek your saving hope, repentance;
Go to your Carmelite, confess to him,
Fly to your soul's physician for a cure;
Whether with soft emollients he assuage,
Or with corrosive penances consume
The cank'rous gangrene that now gnaws your heart.
Hild. I have confess'd to him, he knows my guilt;
But what can he, alas! there lives but one

Under Heaven's canopy, who can absolve.—
Hither the immediate hand of Heaven has led me,
Hopeless of pardon, to expire before you,
And cast your husband's murderer at your feet.
Mat. Ah, scorpion! is it thou? I shake with horror.—
Thee have I pitied? thee have I preserved?—
Monster, avaunt! Go to the rocks for food,
Call to the winds for pity! lay thee down
Beneath some blighted yew, whose poisonous leaf
Kills as it falls; there howl thyself to death!—
Hangs the roof o'er us yet? I am astonish'd.—
Art not ashamed, O earth, to bear him yet?
O sea, to cast him up again?—Begone!
Hild. I do not wait for pardon, but for death:
Call to your servants; whelm me with their swords
Heaven throws me on your mercy; you received
And gave me shelter; hospitably tender'd
Food and restoring medicines; I refused them:
My thirst is unallay'd, my wounds undrest,
No particle of food has past my lips,
For I disdain a fraud upon your pity;
And, where I can't have pardon, scorn support.
The only mercy I implore is death.
Mat. Mercy! and dare thy tongue pronounce the name?—
Mercy! thou may of blood, thou hast destroy'd it
It came from heaven to save Saint Valori:
You saw the cherub messenger alight
From its descent; with outspread wings it sate,
Covering his breast; you drew your cursed steel,
And through the pleading angel pierced his heart.
Then, then the moon, by whose pale light you struc
Turn'd fiery red, and from her angry orb
Darted contagious sickness on the earth;
The planets in their courses shriek'd for horror;
Heaven dropt maternal tears.—Oh! art thou come?

Enter MONTGOMERI.

Mont. Why dost thou tremble? Why this ghastly terror?

Mat. Save me, support me! In thy arms I fall:
I moved not till thou camest, lest I had sunk
Upon the floor, and, catching at the hand
That stabb'd Saint Valori, his touch had killed me.

Mont. That stabb'd Saint Valori! Is this the wretch?
Is Hildebrand before me?—Draw, thou traitor!
Stand to defence, or die!

Hild. Behold my heart!
Strike! I expect no mercy.

Mat. Stop thine hand:
Black though he be, as infamy can make him,
He is defenceless, wounded, and expiring.

Hild. Wilt thou not add, repentant?—I am vanquish'd,
Body and soul laid prostrate by despair.
I do confess my crime: what can I more?
Castle, demesne, and treasure, all the spoils
Of my accursed avarice, I resign:
Take my life too; dismiss me from a world
Where I have none to mourn me, no kind hand
To close my eyes; of children, wife, and friends,
(Save only this poor Carmelite) bereft;
Be merciful to him, he is not guilty.
If I dare ask a little earth to cover me
For Christian decency, I would—but that,
That were too much—my tears will sink a grave.

Mont. He's deeply penitent; you'll not refuse
What he petitions for: 'twere most unchristian
To let him die without the church's rites.

Mat. Forbear!

Mont. He's dying—see, he faints—he falls.

[HILD. *sinks on the ground.*

'Twill give him comfort in the hour of death;
And that I'd give even to a murderer.

Mat. You never knew your father, and in you
Pity is natural; in me 'tis treason
To breathe the air which his pollution taints;
A crime to look upon his eyes and live.

Mont. I feel, I feel your cause; there let him fall:
Die where he lists, but give his corpse a grave.—
And see, the Carmelite approaches.

Mat. Hah!
The Lord De Courci too!—Stand by the body;
And if the wretch has breath to speak again,
Call them to witness his confession. Mark!
In Heaven's own presence, mark this awful scene,
And write it on thy heart!—Farewell! Be constant!
[*Exit* MAT.

Enter SAINT VALORI *and* DE COURCI.

Mont. Noble De Courci, and thou reverend father,
From whom the penitent in life's last hour
Draws holy comfort, look upon that wretch,
Visit his soul with peace at its departure,
And take confession from his dying lips.

St Val. Withdraw, and stand apart then out of hearing. [*They withdraw.*
Lord Hildebrand, if thou hast sense and motion,
Reach forth thine hand.—So! If thou canst, look up!
I am the Carmelite.

Hild. Oh, save me, save me!
I am a sinful man.

St Val. But not a murderer:
He who speaks to you is Saint Valori.

Hild. God of my hope! is it some blessed spirit,
Or living man that speaks?

St Val. A living man,
Saint Valori himself; no spirit!—Mark!

I grasp your hand in token of forgiveness:
Dost thou perceive it?
Hild. At my heart I feel it.—
Can you forgive me? May I die in peace?
St Val. Lo! thus with friendly hand I close thine eyes:
Sleep, sleep! and be at rest from thy afflictions;
Would mine were laid beside thee in the grave!
Hild. Oh balmy comfort! Oh, how sweet to die!—
Farewell for ever: do not quit my hand;
Let it not go, till I am dead.—Farewell! [*Dies.*
St Val. He is dead;—his soul forsook him with that sigh.
Now, sirs, return—'tis past; I have beheld
Religion's triumph, a repentant death.

Re-enter DE COURCI *and* MONTGOMERI.

Call to your servants, and remove the body.
Mont. There is a charitable house hard by,
Where on the ocean's edge a few poor monks,
A slender brotherhood of Mercy, dwell;
For human misery a small asylum;
There often, from the foundering bark escaped,
The houseless wretch finds shelter, and his wounds,
With balsams by the fathers cull'd, are dress'd;
There we'll entomb the body.
St Val. Be it so!
Mont. You now alone survive the morning's wreck:
You by peculiar providence are saved
From a devoted vessel, which the sins
Of its dire owner sunk; still I must wonder
How God's own servant with a dæmon leagued,
And piety with murder could embark.
St Val. You think he was a murderer; have a care
How you incline too rashly to such tales.
Let not your vassals triumph and rejoice
Too much o' the sudden; let your castle keep

Some remnant of its old propriety:
And you, the champion, hang not up your lance
In token of a bloodless victory,
But keep it sharpen'd for a fresh encounter:
And stick your valour to the test, young knight,
Lest haply some new questioner should come,
And dash your feast with horror.

Mont. Reverend stranger,
It will become your order to desist
From threats which cover some mysterious meanin
And speak without disguise. You boast yourself
Noble Saint Valori's friend, yet plead the cause
Of Hildebrand, defend him from the crime
Of murder, and with gloomy menace bid me
Expect some new appellant.—Lo! I am ready.

St Val. Away, vain boy, away!

Mont. Vain let me be,
Not of myself, but of the cause I stand for.
The Lady of Saint Valori accounts me
Worthy to be her champion, by that title
I do impeach the memory of Lord Hildebrand;
And in the presence of this lord, whose person
Stands for the king, arraign him as a murderer:
If any loves his memory so well
As to adopt his cause, let him stand forth,
I pledge myself to answer.

St Val. Lord De Courci,
Shall I reveal myself? I am strongly tempted.
[*Aside.*

De Cour. I do protest against it; and conjure you,
Whilst he is thus in train, leave it to me
To draw confession up.

St Val. I am content.

De Cour. Montgomeri, in virtue of my charge
I have noted your defiance: should there come
A knight of known degree to challenge it,
Say, by what style and title wilt thou answer?

Mont. Ask that of her in whose defence I stand.

De Cour. We know thee for her champion; but declare,
Hast thou no nearer name, no closer tie?
St Val. Answer to that.—'Tis palpable, 'tis gross:
Your silence is confession.
Mont. Ah, good father,
Have you so used confession as an engine
To twist and torture silence to your purpose,
And stain the truth with colouring not its own?
St Val. The man who flies to silence for evasion,
When plainly question'd, aims at a deception
Which candour's self will construe to condemn him.
Mont. Thyself a stranger, dark, inscrutable,
With Hildebrand associate, thou to question me!—
First answer for thyself.
St Val. For myself, then———
De Cour. Stop, recollect your thoughts!
St Val. Thanks, noble lord!—
For myself, then, I own I am your debtor
For no less gift than life; and though that life
Makes what you give a gift of misery,
Yet is the gift uncancell'd.
Mont. Set it down
For nothing but the mutual debt of nature,
Common from man to man.—To-morrow's sun,
With favouring winds to aid us, shall transport
This castle's noble mistress and myself
Across the streight that severs this fair isle
From its maternal shore; there to renew
At Henry's feet, against this bloody man,
Newly deceased, our criminal appeal,
Arraigning him for murder.
St Val. Hah! beware!
Mont. Who shall oppose it?
St Val. I; this noble witness!
Truth, and the living evidence of sight.
Mont. To you, my Lord De Courci, not to him,
Who is a son of peace, to you, a knight

Seal'd with the cross, and militant for truth,
Thus I appeal—What say you to our charge?
De Cour. False, false; I pledge my life upon the proof.
Mont. Hah! by my father's soul, if thou shalt dare
To whisper that to-morrow—
De Cour. If I dare
To whisper it!—My herald shall proclaim it;
I'll cry it in the lists.—There's my gauntlet.
[*Throws it down.*
St Val. Hold, I forbid it—
[*Takes up* DE COURCI'S *gauntlet.*
Brother of the cross,
Upon your knightly honour I conjure you
Put up your gauntlet; I revoke the combat.—
Hear me, young sir, you tread upon your grave;
Fate waves the sword of vengeance o'er your head;
I've pass'd it by, and paid you life for life.
Lo! I provoke you to a gentler combat;
Behold my peaceful gauntlet!—Take this jewel,
[*Gives the bracelet.*
And an hour hence, when I am on my way,
Shew it to her (what shall I call your lady?)
To her that own'd it once.
Mont. I will obey you.
What more have you in mind?
St Val. Tell her the monk,
Through all his pilgrimage from Holy Land
Preserved it sacred; journeying night and day,
By sea, by land, in shipwreck, in the waves,
Still guarded it with reverence more devout
Than holy relics of departed martyrs.
Now 'tis no longer worth: 'tis her's, 'tis your's,
'Tis the next favourite's prize, a transient bauble,
The fleeting emblem of a woman's love.—
No more: farewell!—Come, gallant lord, to horse!
[*Exit with* DE COURCI.

Mont. To horse! why so a warrior would have
call'd:
With such a step a warrior would have trod:
A monk!—Mysterious man! I'll not believe it.
This jewel may unfold the labyrinth—
What then? shall I commit the clue
To sorrow's trembling hand, or firmly hold it
Till more shall be discover'd?—Time direct me!
[*Exit.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

A Chapel, with an Altar decorated with the Funeral Trophies of SAINT VALORI. MATILDA *is discovered kneeling at the Altar.* MONTGOMERI *enters, and, after a pause, speaks.*

Mont. Still at the altar! Ever on her knees—
Nothing but peace! peace to her husband's soul!
Perpetual requiems.—If, as we believe,
The uncircumscribed spirit of a man
Walks after death, till it can find a grave,
Or holy church, with soul-compelling hymns,
Shall chaunt it to repose, I am amazed
My father's ghost, whilst unappeased by prayer,
Ne'er took its shadowy journey to this spot.
Why, when De Courci and the monk outfaced me,

Did he not then arise with all his wounds,
And scare them to confession? I am lost,
Bewildered, and perplex'd! But see! she moves—
[MATILDA *arises, and comes down from the altar to* MONTGOMERI.
Mat. My son! my joy! my blessing!
Mont. Whence is this?
What sudden transformation? By my hopes,
There is a joyful emanation round thee,
That strikes a gleam of rapture to my heart.—
What angel of good tidings hath been with thee?
Who hath exorcised thy despair, and breathed
This beam of placid pleasure in thine eyes?
Mat. Thy father hath been with me.
Mont. Heavens! my father!
Mat. I have seen him in my vision; communed with him
Before the altar: soft his accents fell,
Like voices of departed friends heard in our dreams,
Or music in the air, when the night-spirits
Warble their magic minstrelsy.
Mont. Indeed!
Would I had seen him too!
Mat. Would Heaven thou hadst!
Mont. What was his form?
Mat. Majestically sweet
He smiled upon me; strait through all my veins
Methought I felt a thrilling virtue run,
Healing, where'er it coursed, both heart and brain.
Mont. Saw you no wounds about him?
Mat. None, no wounds;
Nor was he in his youth, as when he died,
But grey with years, and much transformed by time:
At first I knew him not, and as he spoke,
So changed methought he was, with pain I traced
The faded record.
Mont. Spoke he of his murder?

Mat. Oh! not a word; but as it ne'er had been,
And he were living now, so looked and spoke.
Mont. 'Tis strange!—One question more—Say, did this form
Ne'er visit you before?
Mat. Never, till now.
Mont. Nor this, nor any other shape?
Mat. Oh! never, never.
Mont. Then, then I own my confidence is shaken;
And fit it is no longer to conceal
What I have newly heard so boldly vouch'd,
That my faith reels.
Mat. Speak, I conjure thee, speak!
Mont. I came this instant from the Carmelite
And Lord De Courci: on the floor was stretch'd
The breathless corpse of Hildebrand; the monk
In his last moments had been private with him:
I urged the murder, to his own confession
Appealing in my accusation's proof;
When, strange to tell! his confessor the monk
Boldly denied that he had kill'd Saint Valori.
Roused at this daring insult, and indignant,
I turn'd upon De Courci, and demanded
If he would vouch the falsehood; he, more hot
And no less confident than t' other, hurl'd
Defiance in my teeth, and to the ground
Threw down his gauntlet, pledging to the truth
Of what the monk affirm'd.
Mat. I am amazed;
There is a trembling expectation in me,
That by some secret impulse draws me on
To the great revelation of my fate:
Therefore proceed!
Mont. Before I could reply,
The Carmelite had seized De Courci's pledge,
And with a tone and gesture more beseeming
A haughty warrior than a son of peace,
Sternly forbade the challenge to proceed:

Then with a mournful action turning towards me,
And sighing, drew from forth his bosom this,
This pearly chain. [*Produces the bracelet.*
Mat. Ah!—Do my eyes betray me?—
Help, help! uphold me, while I look upon it.—
The same! the same! I gave it to my husband;
My last, fond, parting pledge: guide, guide my hands,
My trembling hands, to touch it.—Sacred relic!
Enthusiastic as the pilgrim's kiss,
Thus to my lips I press thee. Hail, thrice hail!—
To thee, O altar, with these banners deck'd,
Hallow'd with daily incense, and besieged
With never-ceasing requiems for his soul,
I dedicate this trophy of my love!—
Lead me, my son!
Mont. Oh! dost thou love thy son?
Mat. Love thee! O Heaven!
[*Falls on his neck weeping.*
Mont. By that then I conjure thee
Come to thy couch! Now, as thy cheek turns pale,
Convulsion shakes thy lip, and the full stream
Bursts from thine eyes, return not to the altar:
Let me conduct thee forth.
Mat. Where, where's the monk?
Shall I not see him?
Mont. Yes, thou suffering saint!
Be patient for a while, and thou shalt see him.
Mat. Come then, dispose of me as to thy love
And piety seems best: I will obey.
Let me have this—Thou wilt not take this from me.
[*Holding the bracelet.*
Mont. Not for the worth of all this world.
Mat. I thank thee. [*Exeunt.*

Enter SAINT VALORI, DE COURCI, *and* GYFFORD.

St Val. Suffer this last one weakness.—Hah! she's gone;

The chapel is deserted: I had hoped
Once more to have look'd upon her ere we parted.
De Cour. 'Tis better as it is.
St Val. It may be so;
And yet 'twere stern philosophy, methinks,
That could refuse the sight one short indulgence,
Ere the heart breaks with sorrow.
De Cour. I am pain'd
To see this tender sorrow swell so fast.
St Val. Oh! call to mind how I have loved this woman!
Gyfford, thou know'st it; say, thou faithful servant,
What was my passion? how did absence feed it?
But how can'st thou compute my sum of sorrows?
Years upon years have roll'd since thou wast with me:
Time hath not wearied with my groans, my tears
Have damp'd his wings, till he scarce crept along;
The unpitying sun ne'er wink'd upon my toils;
All day I dragg'd my slavery's chain, all night
Howl'd to its clanking on my bed of straw;
And yet these pains were recreation now,
To those I feel, whilst I resign Matilda.
Gyf. Stay then, my noble master, here abide,
And to this awful place convoke your lady.
St Val. This awful place! she'll visit it no more;
Or, if she does, 'twill be to strip these trappings;
These mockeries shall come down, they've had their day,
They've served the uses of hypocrisy,
And festive garlands now shall fill their place
Around this nuptial altar.
De Cour. No, my friend,
I am a witness to her unfeign'd sorrows;
And were I left to judge of them unbiass'd
By what I saw besides, I should believe
She were the very mirror of her sex
For matchless constancy.

St Val. You rend my heart.
Gyf. Thrice on her knees this morning hath she wash'd
This altar's feet with tears, and with her prayers
Sent up a mingled cry of sighs and groans.
St Val. Why then, old man, did'st thou distract my soul
With gossip tales to slander her fair fame,
And murder my repose? If thou art conscious
Of having wrong'd her, get thee hence, begone!
Fall at her feet for pardon, howl for pity,
And hide thyself where light may never find thee.
Gyf. With grief, but not with shame, I will retire
From thee and light.—I have not wrong'd the truth.
St Val. Stay, Gyfford, stay, thou loyal, good old man!
Pity thy master, and forgive my phrenzy.
Lo! I am calm again: the pledge I've given
To young Montgomeri shall be the test:
Yes, with that chain I'll draw her to the proof;
Link'd and entwined about her heart I'll hold it,
And tent her nature to its inmost feelings.—
See, the young favourite comes!

Enter MONTGOMERI.

Mont. Oh! timely found,
Well are you thus encounter'd, holy sir!
The Lady of Saint Valori demands you:
And lo! where she advances.

Enter MATILDA.

Mat. Hah! 'tis well.
In presence of this altar we are met,
And may the sacred genius of the place
Prosper our interview!
St Val. Amen! amen!
Mat. Good friends, withdraw! let none approach the chapel

Whilst we are private.—Now be firm, my heart!
[*They go out—she pauses some time, and then addresses herself to* SAINT VALORI.
Father, I thank you! I've received your pledge,
The small, but priceless relic you have brought me.
The bracelet, given by Lord De Courci's hands
In times long past (fie, fie upon these tears,
They will have way!) to a departed friend.
Perhaps he prized this trifle—but, alas!
'Tis fated, like the arm from which 'twas taken,
Never to clasp him more.
St Val. Alas! I fear it.
Mat. I hope De Courci gave it to my lord.
St Val. He did: I saw him give it.
Mat. Hah! you saw him!
St Val. When he embark'd for Palestine; I've told you
We never march'd apart. I wore the cross
In those fame-seeking days.
Mat. I do remember.—
And this poor favour—did my hero wear it?
St Val. Devoutly, at his heart.
Mat. Then, then indeed
Thou hast bestow'd a treasure.—Welcome, welcome!
[*As she is pressing it to her heart,* ST VALORI, *observing her agitation, runs to her assistance.*
St Val. He wore it like an amulet; with this
Before his heart, first through the yawning breach,
Thy sacred walls, Jerusalem, he storm'd;
Tore down the moony standard, where it hung
In impious triumph: thrice their pagan swords
Shiver'd his mailed crest, as many times
That sacred amulet was dyed in blood
Nearest his heart.
Mat. Stay there! I charge thee, stop!
Tell me no more; Oh, follow him no further,
For see, the accursed Pyrenæans rise,
Streaming with blood; where hellish murder howls;

There madness rages, and with haggard eyes
Glares in the craggy pass!—She'll spring upon me
If I advance. Oh, shield me from the sight!
St Val. Be calm, collect thyself: it was not there,
It was not there Saint Valori met his death.
'Twas not the sword of Hildebrand that slew him;
Though pierced with wounds, that ambush he survived.
Mat. What do I hear? Oh, look upon this altar!
Think where you stand, and do not wrong the truth.
St Val. He who is truth itself be witness for me!—
Deep was the stroke that dire assassin gave,
Yet short of life it stopt; unhorsed and fallen,
Weltering in blood, your wounded husband lay,
Till haply found by charitable strangers
Journeying to Venice, he was heal'd, restored;
And, thence embarking, by a barbarous rover
Was captured.—Start not; but repress your terrors.
Mat. Admire not that I tremble; marvel rather
That I hear this and live.—Saint Valori captured!
The bravest captain of the cross enslaved
By barbarous Pagans!
St Val. Tedious years he suffer'd
Of hard captivity—
Mat. Oh, where, ye Heavens!
Where was your justice then?—And died he there?
St Val. 'Twas not his lot to find a distant grave.
Mat. Where, where?—oh, speak! release me from the rack!—
Where did my hero fall?
St Val. Where did he fall!—
Nor Pagan swords, nor slavery's galling chain,
Nor murderers' daggers, Afric's burning clime,
Toils, storms, nor shipwreck, kill'd him—here he fell!
Grief burst his heart—here in this spot he fell!
[*He falls to the ground.*

Mat. Ah, horror! horror!—Help, for mercy, help!
My son, my son! your father lies before you.

MONTGOMERI *runs in, followed by* DE COURCI *and* GYFFORD.

Mont. My father! Heaven and earth! Oh, save him! save him!
Where shall I turn? See, see! she faints, she falls!
[*Supports her in his arms.*
De Cour. He is her son.—Awake, look up, my friend!
Live, live! De Courci bids Saint Valori live.
Your rival is your son.
[SAINT VALORI, *raising himself on his knee, unsheaths his dagger.*
St Val. Off! give me way:
I'll kill him in her arms.
De Cour. He is your son—
Hear me, thou frantic father! I, De Courci,
I speak to you.—Would you destroy your son?
St Val. Bind up his wounds. Oh, if I've slain my son,
Perdition will not own me!
Mont. He revives.
Nature awakens reason.—Hush! be still.
She stirs.—Withhold him from her arms a while;
Let all be silence, whilst disposing Heaven,
That showers this joy, shall fit them to receive it.
Mat. How could you say my husband is alive?
Which of you keeps him from me?—Oh! 'tis cruel!
St Val. Uncase me of my weeds; tear off my cowl!
Now, now she'll know me; now I am Saint Valori.
(*Throws off his habit, and appears in armour.*
Mat. Stand off! Oh, blessed light of Heaven, shine forth!
Visit my aching eyes, your solar beams,
And let me see [illegible]—Hah! the Cross—
He gleams—he [illegible]—like a mist he rises.—

He lives! he lives! I clasp him in my arms.
My lost Saint Valori! my long-lost husband!
(*Runs into his arms.*
St Val. Oh my heart's joy! do I again embrace thee?
Soul of all honour, constancy, and truth!
Mat. This transport is too quick, it melts my brain;—
The sky runs round; the earth is all in motion;—
Nay, now it whirls too fast.
St Val. Ye saints in bliss!
Heroic matrons! Ye angelic virtues,
Protect your fair resemblance!—Hah! she weeps!—
Kind tears, I thank you! Nature's soft relief,
Waters, that from the soul's full fount run o'er,
To joy or grief welcome alike ye flow,
Assist our patience, and assuage our pain.
Mat. Alas! alas! that I should know thee not.—
What ravages have time and sorrow made
In Heaven's most perfect work, the fairest temple
Nature e'er rear'd in majesty and grace!
St Val. What dire calamity have we escaped!
Now 'tis dispersed, the mists of doubt are fled,
Truth, like the sun, breaks forth, and all is joy.—
My son! my son! oh, throw my arms about him,
And let me cling for ever to his neck!
Mont. Oh sympathetic energy of nature!—
This morn a nameless orphan, now the son
Of living parents: he for virtue famed,
For dignity of soul, and matchless courage:
She for affection, constancy renown'd,
Inspired with truth, with every grace adorn'd,
A woman's fondness, and an angel's faith.
Mat. Heaven hear my praises! echo them, O earth!
Cherubs, that come with healing on your wings,
Waft my thanksgiving back!—Bright beam of
Visit the inmost chambers of my heart;

And where grief [illegible] husband's monument,
Fix now his living image: there, as time
Shook not the faithful witness from my soul,
When grief assail'd it, so in joy support me,
And guard my constancy in both extremes.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF VOLUME FIFTH.

EDINBURGH:
James Ballan[illegible]

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